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"The Word" Library—No. 4.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

By

GUY A. ALDRED

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As the letters published in this pamphlet are collected in order of their original date of publication in the press, arrangement, in the matter of contents, has been difficult.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

(1904-1939)

FOREWORD

"Letters to the Editor" deserve to rank as essays in revolt. They are attempts to invade the surrounding secular world of unbelief, or of different belief, which one influences and penetrates only through the medium of secular association. Such efforts to enlighten the profane world receive a wider circulation and consideration than the essay printed in the sectarian journal, or the propaganda pamphlet, which commands the limited attention of a world within the world. The pamphlet or essay may exert, finally, tremendous influence. The "Letter to the Editor" may start a widespread train of thought.

The present collection of "letters" cover a period of thirty-five years. The collection does not exhaust the "letters" written during that period. But the back of the correspondence is broken. The collection is representative. One can judge, from reading them, how far the author has been consistent down the years: whether he has been inspired by public usefulness and truthfulness or by careerism.

The publication in collected form has presented difficult problems. Ought the letters to be reprinted as first published? Should addresses and dates be preserved? Should the signature be reproduced in every case or implied? I have decided to leave the letters as they appeared, with headings, addresses, dates or not, and signature, as published in the paper in the first instance. This is done not from vanity—it is silly to wish to write one's name down a thousand times—but from accuracy. The reader can see at the glance the letter as it originally appeared.

For reasons of economy of space, I have reprinted as few opposing letters as possible. When it has been necessary to do so, in the interest of understanding, or of fair play, the opponent's letter has been reproduced.

THE AUTHOR.

Glasgow, March 11, 1939.

"Agnostic Journal," London, December 10, 1904.

CHRISTIAN v. ANTI-CHRISTIAN CONTROVERSY.

SIR,—Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh, in *The Christian's Armoury* for December, after having proved that he considers "discretion the better part of valour," by informing "Manchester," in his "Answers to Correspondents," that the wisest course for Christians to adopt is to Boycott Secular meetings, makes the following assertion:—

> " 'Discussion invited,' which is printed on their (Secularist's) bills, simply means discussion avoided, unless the opponent happened to be ignorant of the doings of the Secular party for the past ten years or more. If these men are really pining for a fight, let them come to London, and fight the battle on neutral ground. The whole of the proceeds, after paying rent of hall, printing, advertising and necessary expenses, to be given to the London hospitals."

Excellent! Truly, this is another Daniel come to judgment!

Now, sir, nothing would suit me better than to accept these terms of Mr. Bradlaugh, and, if he desires that "by their fruits we should know them," to compare the contentions of the Christian Church with the contentions of the Secular Party; the crimes of the former with the crimes(?) of the latter; and the blessings bestowed upon mankind by the cult of Jesus with the advantages of Secularism, as represented by Charles Bradlaugh, George Jacob Holyoake, and Saladin, not forgetting G. W. Foote, Chapman Cohen and others. And I do so all the more readily, because, from the third Sunday in April to the second in November, I conducted, mostly at my own expense, a Freethought mission in Clerkenwell, besides making a similar suggestion myself in the *Enfield Chronicle* of April 25th, 1903, on the occasion of challenging the Rev. J. Bedworth Jones to a debate. The words I then used were:—

> "If publicly, then let the public be charged for admittance to debating hall, the money thereby received to go to some local charity, and the decision to rest with Mr. Jones."

On that occasion, however, the challenge was refused; but I trust that Mr. Bradlaugh will shew a greater temerity than his reverend brother. At any rate, should it be accepted, I can promise to make a gallant effort to do justice to the atrocious crimes, carnage and contentions of the Christian religion, as also to the benefits and advantages which mankind owe to Infidelity and Secularism.

As to his witticism about "Discussion avoided," I can only say that during my occupation of Clerkenwell Green no opponent could lay the charge of want of fairness or fear of honest discussion against me. Nor have I found any instances of the Secular meetings not giving their opponents fair-play, although I have known, and can recall, instances of Freethinkers being barred Christian Evidence platforms, and of Christians rushing Freethought rostrums. This by the way.

In conclusion, may I add that my reason, for addressing myself to the *Agnostic Journal* only, is because your paper is outside any particular division, and is therefore more representative of my object, *viz.*, to shew that true Secularism, whatever its divisions, tends to the betterment, ennobling and upliftment of humanity?—Yours truly,

GUY A. ALDRED.

The Clarion, London, January 27, 1905.

THE "CLARION" IN THE LIBRARIES.

To the Editor of the CLARION.

SIR,—In reply to a letter of mine, dated December 12, 1904, which I addressed to the Town Clerk of the Finsbury Borough Council, offering to place the "Freethinker," "Agnostic Journal," and the CLARION upon the library table at my own expense, I have received the following communication from Mr. J. D. Brown, Librarian and Secretary to the Finsbury Public Libraries Committee, dated the 11th inst.:

> "Dear Sir,—I am directed by the Public Libraries Committee to thank you for your offer to present certain periodicals to the library, and to say that they will be pleased to accept the 'Agnostic Journal' and the CLARION, as proposed by you.— I am, yours faithfully,
>
> JAMES DUFF BROWN."

So far as this goes, and considering that the "Literary Guide" is already placed upon the Clerkenwell Public Library table, this is satisfactory. But why this boycott of so strenuous an advocate of freethought and so old a veteran as the "Freethinker"?—I remain, yours fraternally,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Agnostic Journal, London, August 12, 1905.

MAHOMET.

Sir,—It has been said that no man has a right to assert that his religion is the only true one until he has studied the personality and teachings of the founders of other so-called "divine revelations." For those who are prepared to act upon this axiom, it would be impossible to find a more interesting book than "The Sayings of Muhammad," a popular half-a-crown volume published by Constable & Co., and edited by Abdullah Al Mamun Al-Suhrawardy.

From the editorial foreword I cull the following description of the great prophet:—

> "Muhammad was a man of imposing presence, of medium height, broad shouldered, and strongly built, with fine features, coal-black hair and eyes, and a long beard. His mental powers were of a high order, his manners reserved yet affable and courteous, his speech laconic and often humorous, a man of strong passions but noble impulses, capable of great love, great generosity, altogether a character of surprising force, capacity, shrewdness, and determination. Temperate and prudent in youth, he gained in manhood the name of 'al-Amin.' or 'the faithful,' from his fair and upright dealing. Just and affectionate in private life, he lived in the humblest style in a poor hut, eating the plainest food, lighting his own fire, and mending his own clothes and shoes, having given his slaves their freedom. For months together he would seldom eat a hearty meal, always sharing it with those whose need was greater; a number of the poor lived entirely on his generosity."

—Yours truly, G. A. A.

Daily Mail, London, Wednesday, September 6, 1905.

SHOULD CLERGYMEN CRITICISE THE BIBLE?

A WAY OUT.

To the Editor of the *Daily Mail.*

Sir,—As an ordinary layman I have been delighted with the candour with which so many of your clerical correspondents have written, although it has seemed to me to be a little inconsistent with their ordination vows and nominal adherence to the Thirty-nine Articles.

The question is not, I take it, as to the validity or non-validity of the higher criticism—why not also include the equally iconoclastic lower criticism in our consideration of the question?—but as to whether a cleric, having once promised to diligently teach the duty of an unfeigned belief in the canonical Scriptures, and throughout his ministry pretending an adherence to articles which preclude the right of destructive criticism, has a right to criticise the Bible.

And seeing that he can never honestly put off the clergyman in the matter of judgment, I should answer the question in the negative. Men like Canon Henson, Dean Armitage Robinson, Bishop Gore, Canon Wilson, and Archdeacon Wilberforce have no present right in the Church; and their scholarship and weight are such that were they to take the honest course of resigning in a body, they

could bring about the much-needed alteration in its constitution and sixteenth-century Articles.

GUY A. ALDRED.

133 Goswell Road, E.C.

The Freethinker, London, December 17, 1905.

A "TORREYITE."

To the Editor of "The Freethinker."

Sir,—Under the heading "Sunday Mornings in London," "R.M.S." in the *Daily News* of Monday, December 4 last, describes a visit he paid to the Upper George-street Presbyterian Church, Marylebone, W., of which the Rev. George Hanson, M.A., D.D., is the pastor. The following is from his description of the impression made on him by Dr. Hanson:—

> "The first impression is made by the voice; a deep, rich voice, not various in cadence, nor opulent in modulation, but full of feeling: now throbbing like the string of a 'cello, now pulsating like a cathedral bell... As the service proceeded the impression, which developed into permanence was that of the genuine goodness of the preacher. I have rarely sat under a man who so impressed me with a sense of noble piety. It was impossible to listen to him and not feel that here was an uncommon type, a man whose spiritual circuit was complete, whose conception of the responsibility of his office was humbling in its height, who cherished a holy of holies in his breast. A man of culture, but of more than culture; of wisdom, the wisdom not of the midnight oil, but of the midnight vigil . . . it has rarely been my good fortune to hear a preacher who thought so little of himself and so much of his purpose, who so convincingly and so silently, no less than audibly, proclaimed that for him to live 'was Christ.'"

Taking it for granted that this is a correct delineation of the preacher's style and character, the question arises what is the meaning of "living for Christ," and how does it affect a man's relations with his fellows? This is best answered by recording a little anecdote of the manner in which Dr. Hanson has slandered Mr. J. T. Lloyd, and when brought to book, failed to substantiate his charges. The facts of the case to which I refer are as follows: In June and July this year, Dr. Hanson spoke for the Christian Evidence Society in Hyde Park, and in the course of his lectures he declared that he had evidence in his possession to prove that Mr. Lloyd had been deprived of his office in the Presbyterian ministry on account of his having been found guilty of grave moral offences. His statements subsequently formed the theme of several discourses delivered respectively by Messrs. Baily, Greene and Bryant, from the Christian Evidence platform and under the auspices of that society. These men always referred us to the Pastor of the George Street Presbyterian Church for authoritative details. I accordingly addressed, during last August, two letters to Dr. Hanson and after a delay of nearly a fortnight, received the

postcard enclosed, which I transcribe for the benefit of your readers:—

> "If you write to The Clerk, Johannesburg Presbytery, Johannesburg, S. Africa, you will get an official and authentic statement.
> Castlerock, 21.8.'05. (Signed) G. HANSON."

I accordingly wrote to Johannesburg immediately, but up to the present I have received no reply. Nor do I expect to receive one. I ask your readers, however, to note the cowardly mental gymnastics of this reverened dealer in pious slander when asked to substantiate his charges. And this is the man who impressed the *Daily News* representative with "a sense of noble piety." Possibly the *Daily News* "spiritual circuit" like that of Dr. Hanson's "is complete," which accounts for his appreciation of this "comrade-in-abuse" of Dr. Torry. At least, one would think he was a fit subject for Evan Roberts' Welsh hysteria.

GUY A. ALDRED.

(We have seen the official document by which Mr. Lloyd was deposed from the Presbyterian Church in South Africa. It contained no reflection of any kind upon his personal character. He was simply charged with preaching Atheism. Whenever he renounced his heresy he could apply for reinstatement.—Editor, "Freethinker.")

Justice, London, Weekly Organ of the Social Democratic Federation, 1906. Actual date of issue appears above each letter.

SOCIALISM AND FREE SPEECH.

After the General Election of 1922, the Labour Party in Britain published a souvenir of Labour victories, consisting of a work. entitled *Labour Personalities in the House of Commons.* The "personalities" mentioned included, duly adorned with the portrait, the following reference to R. C. MORRISON (*Co-operative*) (*North Tottenham*):—

> "A member of the Management Committee of the London Co-operative Society, also a member of the Middlesex County Council, the Middlesex Education Committee, and the National Union of Teachers. Returned to Parliament as a Co-operator, but is also a member of the Labour Party.
>
> "In great demand at Co-operative gatherings.
>
> "I. Con. 395; N. Lib. 4181; Con. 8392; Co-op. 10,250—Maj. 1858."

Mr. R. C. Morrison had gone far since the 1906 *Justice* and S.D.F. days, and has given much more heed to capitalist reading than I have done during the intervening years.—Author's Note.

Saturday, February 17, 1906.

SIR.—At a time when we are concerned with the cowardly tactics of the Radicals at Camborne, it is well, perhaps, that we should sit in judgment on ourselves. The present letter is neither an attack on the policy of the S.D.F. nor on any particular branch or active comrades in the cause of progress and working-class emancipation. But recently the present writer has been attending the debates held in connection with one of the most advanced, most progressive, and most efficient of the London branches of our organisation. On one occasion the lecture dealt with the relationship between Emersonian philosophy and Socialism, on another with the basis of Social-Democracy, and on a third with Socialism made easy. On each occasion I took occasion to differ from the lecturer, differing from the comrade who lectured upon the "Basis of Social Democracy" upon the question of the ethical basis of its economics, and with the third lecture upon the question of "State v. Scientific Socialism," my attitude upon this question corresponding with that of Hyndman and other leaders in our movement. During these discussions there have been present some of my secularist friends, who, in my opinion, have indulged in metaphysical sophistry. In theirs, however, they hold that they are quite sincere and honest. Nevertheless, my questions have not been answered, I have been accused of giving the lead to individualistic quibbling, and informed that elementary Socialistic lectures did not take into account the scientific side of the subject. For my part, I hold that Socialism is essentially scientific and that we should not convert our economics into a faith we are not prepared to defend, or into a religion, the essential note of which is bigotry and dogmatism. Yet I must confess Socialists are too prone to do this, and I, therefore, appeal to my comrades to give a fair hearing to what they consider to be the "arrant nonsense" of the opposition, and to remember that before their conversion possibly Socialism was "arrant nonsense" to them. We know what persecution is, let us therefore, in the name of the liberty for which we strive, not seek to prevent the propagation of ideas and the freedom of speech for which our forefathers fought.—Yours fraternally,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Saturday, February 24, 1906.

Dear Comrade,—As one who took part in preventing the freedom of speech complained of by comrade Guy A. Aldred in last

week's *Justice,* and as the reputation of our branch may suffer if no reply is made, perhaps you will allow me to explain. The Southwark branch have been holding a series of Sunday evening propaganda lectures (not debates, as comrade Aldred says). A large proportion of our audiences are beginners. On Sunday, January 28, I delivered a lecture on "Socialism Made Easy," specially intended for beginners. Such an occasion was clearly not the time to indulge in a discussion as to the merits of any particular school of Socialist thought. All that I was concerned about was to make clear the root principle upon which all Socialists are agreed—viz., that the means of life should be owned and controlled by the whole people. Therefore I refused to be drawn because I could foresee that the result would be much the same as it had been on previous Sundays, the effect of the lecture would be nullified, and most of the audience would have gone home dazed and bewildered, and wondering what it had all been about. Now, as regards the secularist friends who were also "closured." That their questions were either sincere or honest I do not believe, because while I was speaking they paid little or no attention, but sat talking and laughing, so much so that comrade Aldred himself had to rebuke them, and comrade Mrs. Spackman, who was in the chair, informed me afterwards that she was several times on the point of asking them either to keep order or to leave the meeting. Now I submit that it would have been a flagrant abuse of the privilege of free speech to have allowed these individuals, as unfortunately they had been allowed on previous occasions, to practically monopolise both questions and discussion with their "metaphysical sophistry." The relief of our sorely-tried audience at the attitude I took up, could be almost felt, and was well-expressed in joyful tones by comrade Sims, of Bermondsey Branch. In conclusion, the Southwark S.D.F. are out to make Socialists; they are no respecter of persons; all metaphysical sophists, individualistic quibblers, and dialectic jugglers they treat with scant ceremony. And just because of that, the cause of Social Democracy is making rapid progress in Southwark.—

Yours fraternally,

ROBT. C. MORRISON.

P.S.—Speaking in Regent's Park for Kentish Town Branch on the morning of the same day, I answered 15 questions put in succession by one of the audience. Not much limitation of free speech about that!—R. C. M.

Sir,—I am in entire agreement with your valued correspondent, Mr. Guy A. Aldred, in urging Socialist lecturers in addressing their

own comrades, and (incidentally one or two "strangers to the faith" who may attend indoor lectures) to go a little *beyond* the elementary a la "Britain for the British" Socialism and occasionally deal with the matter from a scientific standpoint. I, myself, have this winter "done" nearly all the halls, and have been surprised to find very few "popular lecturers" who can handle the subject scientifically.

Why cannot comrade Quelch take some of these gentlemen in hand, say once a week, and polish them up a bit. It would be an education to the speakers themselves and a real boon to the intelligent Socialist auditor.—Yours fraternally,

FREDERICK HOWARD.

Saturday, March 3, 1906.

THE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH.

Dear Comrade,—As comrade Morrison has introduced personal particulars which I excluded as being irrelevant to the moral of my letter, I should be extremely grateful if you would allow me to correct his statements in a controversy in which I do not seek the last word. Having been allowed to do this, I shall not trespass further on your valuable space in reference to this dispute. In the first place, as one who has twice addressed the Sunday evening meetings of the Southwark branch during the present year, allow me to state that open discussion and questions have always followed the lecture. And I suppose, when a lecturer asks for open discussion, he does not mean open so far as he is capable of answering it, but open so long and so far as it is relevant to the nature of the lecture. I come now to comrade Morrison's lecture, "Socialism Made Easy." "Such an occasion," he says, "was clearly not the time to indulge in a discussion as to the merits of any particular school of Socialist thought." But nobody sought to raise such a discussion, least of all the present writer, who has time after time clearly defined the attitude of the various schools of Socialist thought, and shown that the most practicable and consistent is that adopted by the S.D.F. The only question I asked referred to the question of State Socialism and majority rule as opposed to scientific Socialism. And as the speaker did not distinguish between the two, but seemed to be under the impression that both were the same, I urged upon him the need to draw a distinction. In this I should have received the hearty support of comrade Hyndman had he been present. But comrade Morrison twitted me with thinking for myself, and refused to answer. So much for his free speech.

To say that on the same morning he answered a number of questions elsewhere is no reply. A practical adherence to the right of free speech is not shown by the number of questions answered, but in the manner of answering questions. And that spirit is shown by too few Socialists. Many a lecturer will apply an adjective to some politician, which he has culled from the current *Justice*, and not understand its reference. It is against this spirit that I war. And but for the questions asked by those who differed from me, many a lecture of mine would have fallen flat. Lecturers are not infallible, and there is no reason why Socialists should fear free speech. A scheme of social economy which can withstand the dialectical skill of a Bradlaugh and a G. W. Foote, does not need to be degraded into an ecclesiastical dogma. Essentially scientific, it will gain more by the establishment than by the suppression of free speech; and if I thought it did not, I should not be a Socialist. For the rest, the fact that some of the most active members of the Southwark Branch endorse the attitude that I have taken up on this question is my all-sufficient justification.—Yours fraternally,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Saturday, March 20, 1906.

FREE SPEECH.

Dear Comrade,—As comrade Aldred has generously allowed me the last word in this controversy, at least so far as he and I are concerned, I shall not abuse his generosity, but will be brief. Comrade Aldred has stated his case very clearly in his two letters; but, nevertheless, I am still of the same opinion—namely, that it is the duty of a speaker to see that his lecture is not side-tracked, and to refuse to be drawn into any discussion on a minor issue not immediately connected with his lecture, if he thinks there is a danger that the main points he has made will be lost sight of by so doing. If I have offended comrade Aldred by my action, I am sorry; but, under similar circumstances, I should again act in the same way. Our comrade is a hard worker for Socialism; his "Parliamentary Gossip" is bright and interesting, and probably as he gets a little older and gains more experience in the movement he may alter his opinion; for, after all, in these matters to quote Rousseau's words, "Experience is the best schoolmaster."—Fraternally yours,

ROBT. C. MORRISON.

5 St. Bede's Terrace, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

The Right of Free Speech

Justice, March 31, 1906.

"A NEW LABOUR PARTY."

Dear Comrade,—As a member of the professional classes referred to in the article which appeared in last week's *Justice*, under the above heading, I should be obliged if you would allow me to say a word in regard to that contribution, and also to pass a criticism upon your leaderette thereon. In the first place, it seems to me that "Ulla" greatly overstates the case for the "professional" classes, whilst betraying a sad ignorance of the real nature of their work. Let us see. I note the appeal on behalf of the poor parson, first. Why should such an individual be allowed or requested to join a union? If he feels a "call" to preach religion in all sincerity—as I do to preach atheism and Socialism—then give him all credit and all freedom of speech; but let him remember that sincerity of purpose is a questionable business asset and he can never prove "a commercial success" under capitalism. This recognised, the existence of the law of supply and demand appreciated, all further need for his enlargements on "the working of providence" vanish. In other words, as a parson he is not a *useful* member of the community. Coming to journalism, I write with some authority on the subject, but I must confess that I fail to see how its paid representatives are the more intelligent and intellectual classes, nor can I appreciate the force of the tribute paid to them by "Ulla," when she says that "by their pen and mental and professional labours, they are helping forward social and democratic progress, and are manfully assisting to better the conditions for the skilled and unskilled manual workers, who are now so well represented in Parliament." Combined with a detestable snobbery, so far as I can discover, the total failure to correctly understand the meaning of history, biography, and science aright, makes the journalist a person to be abhorred. Nor is he animated with a sincerity of purpose sufficient to cause him to write for principle and to put that before monetary reward. And even the mass of detailed information which marks the performances of many a "mental day-labourer" is not of the writer's own collecting, but has been filed by a staff of special employees. For my part, as a writer on, and student of, history, theology, and sociology, I know full well that in these days of cant, humbug, and insincerity, I can demand no livelihood as a reward for educating people. For that I must look to other employment. Meanwhile, I can say that I have written nothing that I have feared to put my name to, whilst I find my all-sufficient reward for services rendered in the knowledge that I am driving a few nails into the coffin of modern snobbery and principle-selling. In conclusion, if the penman would find his social salvation, let him join our ranks; if not, I can assure "Ulla" that no union can increase his "salary"—I was going to say "wages"—and that he must go to the wall.—

Yours fraternally,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Letters to the Editor

The Freethought Socialist lectures conducted by the author in Clerkenwell, on Clerkenwell Green and at Garnault Place, in 1906, were reported very fully in the *Islington Daily Gazette.* Many letters were published in its columns and there was some talk of prosecution for alleged blasphemy. At the time of going to press I find I have only one letter preserved.

Islington Daily Gazette, London, June 4, 1906.

FREETHOUGHT BLASPHEMY.

Sir,—Without in any way desiring to add to my indebtedness to you, I should very much like to inquire through your columns of "A.B.H." what the scurrilous assertions were that I made in the course of my lecture the other evening. What was there in my lecture the other night that could "wrinkle the face of a cab horse and disgust any decent person?" I confess, on reading your excellent report of what I said, I failed to find anything likely to give offence to the most bigoted puritan—unless, of course, the sense of such a person was merely horse-sense.

Let us look at it from the standpoint of God existing, being our loving Father, and Jesus Christ being the Divine Saviour. Supposing all these three dogmas to be true, I still maintain that man is elevated and God honoured by thus serving our fellows; and in the event of my dogmas being true, man is still better off for living for himself and posterity than seeking his own salvation beyond the grave. As I have so often claimed, I revolt from orthodox interpretations of Christianity because I am religious. We admire the great man because he is beyond flattery. God, if he exists, is greater than the greatest of men; being also perfect, He is self-contained. He is not affected by the prayers of man whose praises cannot add unto God's glory. And so the noblest way of serving Him is to live for man and thus become more God-like.

But, urges "A.B.H.," I am in the same quandary as the Christian when I urge living for posterity, since I am as ignorant of posterity's conditions as he is of the nature of the post-mortem paradise. That is not true. Evolution in society and the history of the past serves as an all-sufficient index to the conditions prevailing when I have gone to dust. But science destroys all hope of continued individual existence beyond the grave. There is no index to what would constitute the nature of such an existence supposing belief in it could be vindicated; whilst the personality of the individual is as much physical as it is psychical.

In conclusion, I would remind "A.B.H." what the right of calling one's self "reverend" has never, so far as I know, been touched on by any Freethought propagandist other than myself! and even then it is a small matter. I have already outlined the basis of religion in your issue of the 28th inst., and "A.B.H." would do well to deal with that letter.

Reminding Mr. Walker that he does Mr. Jameson an injustice in attributing to him views which I hold in opposition to those of Mr. Jameson, I leave your readers to judge who has written with the least venom and indulged in the fewest personalities in this controversy.

I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED

(Minister of the Gospel of Freethought).

133 Goswell Road, E.C., May 31st, 1906.

Star, London, November 29, 1913.

IRRESPONSIBLE STUDENTS.

To the Editor.

Sir,—As one who was present at the Albert Hall meeting addressed by Mr. Larkin, may I be allowed to enter an emphatic protest against the public corruption which is satisfied with fining the "students" and allowing their parents to pay the damages? If these "wreckers" have careers before them not open to the workers, that is due to their parents' money, not to their individual ability. Actually, they aimed at creating a panic which might have resulted in a serious loss of life, and they wantonly destroyed property, not from need but from their class feeling and babyish irresponsibility. Working men for disturbing meetings are fined and imprisoned. Sweated women for stealing a little jam from a sweating factory are jailed. No thought is given to their children. For disturbing a Cabinet Minister's meeting women are roughly handled and jailed. But these "students," because they have careers, and because their parents have money, are to be adjudged irresponsible—and let off.

The law which imprisons Mr. Larkin and gives Sir Edward Carson full licence, may be expected to smile on "folly which amounts to positive wickedness" when practised by "students." I hope that workers will take the lesson to heart.

GUY A. ALDRED.

Richmond Gardens, Shepherd's Bush, W.

Manchester Guardian, Friday, April 7 1916.

THE ARREST OF ABSENTEES.

To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian.

Sir,—I wish to call your attention to the case of Henry Sara, who was sentenced to one month's imprisonment to-day under the

Military Service Act No. 2. Sara was called to the colours on March 18 last. He replied to the recruiting authorities in a registered letter returning his form, and stating firmly and clearly his opposition to war and to oath-taking as a Socialist. Sara has maintained a consistent opposition to war for many years and can produce writings to show it. Yesterday morning he was arrested at this address as an absentee under the Act. He was kept in the Askew Road Police Station all day and night and charged this morning. I ask if this treatment fits a man to conduct his defence?

To-day Sara was charged at the West London Police Court. He was neither allowed to see his friends nor given an opportunity to state his case. He was told by the magistrate that the sooner his mouth was closed the better. Is this law? Is this judicial calm?

It should be added that, notwithstanding Mr. Walter Long's instructions, the Hammersmith Tribunal held that it could not give total exemption for conscience. Consequently, under no circumstances would he have been permitted to have his conscientious position considered.

The stand for civic liberty is too dear a heritage to be meekly surrendered, and I am drawing your attention to this case as part of my endeavour to direct attention, official and public, to the growing militarism and despotism in our midst.—Yours, &c.,

GUY A. ALDRED, Editor, *The Spur*.

17 Richmond Gardens, Shepherd's Bush,
London, W., April 5.

Saturday, April 8, 1916.

Sir,—Yesterday I addressed a letter to you in connection with the arrest and imprisonment of Henry Sara under the Military Service Act No. 2. The military authorities refused to let him serve his sentence, and he has been passed over to the 3rd London Regiment. At the White City, I understand Sara refused to strip or to don khaki. I am doing my best to open communication with him, so as, if possible, to glean all the facts. But the foregoing statement, coupled with details contained in my letter of yesterday, is sufficient to show that Sara comes within the category of the conscientious objector, and is entitled, therefore, to be released equally with the four Christadelphians who adopted a similar course. Sara is being removed to Salisbury to-day, and is being dressed and undressed compulsorily. He is in an atmosphere bitterly opposed, of course, to his stand for conscience, and is subject to severe hardship and suffering.

Since conscience has been recognised as an individual factor of some social importance in connection with the present Act, may I

plead for co-operation to secure its respectful recognition in the present case? Certainly if Sara's life and that of thousands of others of conscientious objectors is to be saved the lovers of freedom must move quickly and prevent an example of military execution being made in this case.—Yours, &c.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Date Lost, 2 or 3 Days Later.

THE CASE OF MR. HENRY SARA. — Mr. Guy A. Aldred (editor, *The Spur*) writes in the course of a letter from 17 Richmond Gardens, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.:—I am drawing your attention again to the case of Mr. Henry Sara, now a prisoner of war for conscience at Salisbury Plain. Many leading members of Parliament have written to me explaining their opposition to the Act and their sympathetic interest in the present case. Sir William Bull, the member for Hammersmith, notwithstanding his known opposition to Socialism and leaning towards national service, put the case before the authorities as soon as the full facts were brought to his notice. Dr. John Clifford has written to state that Sara's stand is abundant evidence of his genuine fidelity to conviction, and advises the maintenance of this fight for freedom. A friendly soldier states that Sara is roughly treated because, despite every persecution, he refuses to drill when sent out on Salisbury Plain with the other men of the regiment. The National Council Against Conscription is taking the matter up, and will make a test case of his treatment. Meanwhile, meetings are being arranged all over the country, and in Scotland and Wales resolutions are being passed at large assemblies protesting, in various terms, against the arrogant attitude of the military authorities in this matter.

West London Observer, January 24, 1919.

GUY ALDRED'S THANKS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—May I thank you for the genereous way in which you have drawn attention to my repeated imprisonments under the Military Service Act? I would like my many sympathisers to realise, however, that I am now free under the Cat and Mouse Act until February 4th. My re-arrest will involve continual close confinement without exercise until I am completely broken down in health. And this demand is to be made upon my constitution after I have suffered two years and eight months' imprisonment with hard labour. My con-

stitution has withstood this persecution so well up to now, because of the care I have taken of my health by my life-long abstinence from vicious habits. Surely, it is up to the workers, and also to our public men, to put a stop to this vain and inglorious persecution.

Thanking you for your courtesy,

GUY A. ALDRED

(Editor, *The Spur*).

January 13, 1919.

Manchester Guardian, February 15, 1919.

THE IMPRISONED C.O.'S.

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Manchester Guardian*.

Sir,—In your issue for January 14 last, you published a letter from me which was dated from my home address at Shepherd's Bush. This detailed the circumstances of my release under the "Cat-and-Mouse" Act till February 4. I now learn that the Government intends to rearrest me and the thirteen comrades who were released with me. It intends to rearrest the four or five men who were released a few days after myself and my companions. And it will proceed to rearrest, during the next few weeks, the twelve men who have been released from Winchester. May I point out that practically all the men who are being thus persecuted have served over 2½ years' imprisonment with hard labour? May I draw attention to the fact that, whereas in Scottish prisons men are not compelled to work and are allowed their own food, in English prisons they are placed on starvation diet if they refuse to accept industrial conscription?

My own movements are open, because I have no intention of evading the Conscription Act. The end of three years' persecution finds me as resolute as ever. I shall return to London in a few days and await rearrest. But I would point out that my health is as bad as that of many men who have been permanently released on health grounds. And this statement applies to my comrades. We cannot endure the misery of bread and water, no books, no letters, no visits, and underground confinement for ever.

Let me add that the Conscription Act applies equally to England and Scotland. Yet if arrested here and conveyed to Duke Street prison my treatment will be completely different from that which I shall receive if returned to an English prison.—Yours &c.,

GUY A. ALDRED, Editor, *The Spur*.

13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, W.,

February 13.

Conscientious Objectors

The Freethinker, London, October 7, 1923.

THE DEVIL'S CHAPLAIN.

Sir,—I was interested to read Mr. Cutner's comment on my "biography" of Robert Taylor, published in your columns. I have not the *Diegesis* by me as I sent it some few months back to Sir Walter Strickland in Mexico. Perhaps when he sees this discussion, he will say whether my impression is correct or not. My impression is that Taylor *does* collect, in the *Diegesis,* a vast amount of data in support of the astro-myth theory and his contention that the personality of Christ is a plagiarism from Pagan saviours. His *Devil's Pulpit,* whilst racy in parts, and forced in its humour in other parts, is much inferior. It argues brilliance but sometimes suggests shallowness. The *Diegesis* is less racy, truly learned, and reveals depth. I am quite sure my impression is correct, for I have studied the *Diegesis* often and have consulted it at distances of months and years, in quite different moods, always with the same result and conviction.

Mr. Cutner doubts if the *Devil's Pulpit* would stand the test of modern criticism. In the main, yes, as to its conclusions, though its style is not too pleasing always. I was much interested—I believe modern affectation uses the word "intrigued"—to note in re-reading Eusebius that, he, with some other apologists, contended that *not* only "Christ!"—which is a title or office and need not relate to any one person—but also "Jesus"—which is a name—was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and he has a great chapter identifying "Jesus" with "Joshua." It is obvious that Taylor, who founds his theory partly on parallels like this, is interpreting the views of the Church Fathers and not wresting facts from their context.

I quite agree, and emphasise again the fact, that no Christian apologist has ever answered Taylor's smashing indictment of the Christian religion. That does not affect the question whether a man called Jesus Christ ever existed. Taylor actually attacked the finished Christ myth, the half if not completely deified saviour of the sixth century. This Christ had been grafted into the Pagan deities. But he does not grapple with the growing conception of Jesus's character, with the person whom the earlier Christians and the heresiarchs believed in; a quite different individual. I quite agree that even this Christ never existed; but, as I have shown elsewhere, finally we all become myths. Orthodoxy on the one hand, Christ Church established, and Taylor, the Freethought critic, on the other, agreed on a certain conception. The one side said this Christ had existed, and Taylor, with much wealth of learning, and rigor of reasoning, showed that no such person ever could have existed. Posterity will applaud Taylor.

As to the Nazareth and Bethlehem births, seeing that the latter is founded on a forgery, and supported by a lie, it is obvious that

there never was a Bethlehem birth. In the pamphlet from which Mr. Cutner quotes I trace the date of this invention. The Nazareth birth is more reasonable as it is not strained to support a miracle and does not rest on a forgery. I am open to believe that also never occurred if Mr. Cutner wishes to convert me. I have no bias in the matter. But I do not wish to spoil sound criticism by un-unnecessary scepticism.

I regret all my copies of the pamphlet are in Glasgow and I cannot correct Mr. Cutner's excerpts. In essentials they are correct. But I do not contend that Jesus was a Communist and Anarchist. I say something very like that, but there is a difference and a distinction.

Personally, I would like to have a friendly discussion on the public platform with a fellow Freethinker as to whether a person called Jesus Christ did live. It is obvious, I do not mean a God, only a man. I think the discussion could be interesting in the scholarship, the thought, and the research it would open up, rather than for the actual value of the immediate subject of debate. No Christian could discuss the matter with scholarship or usefulness, but we might do so ourselves. I am prepared to uphold the affirmative.

However, whether Jesus lived or not, the religion associated with his name is of no importance, and Atheism is the proper foundation of all healthy intellectual activity.

GUY A. ALDRED.

October 28, 1923.

Sir,—I noticed Mr. Cutner's reply to me in your columns of October 14. Although I am quoting only from memory, and Mr. Cutner seems to have read the *Diegesis* just before writing, I am quite certain that my impression is correct. As a matter of fact I could reproduce the entire argument of Taylor's splendid introductory chapter in which he states the case to be discussed. That chapter alone fully justifies my contention that Taylor attacked the finished Christ myth.

Mr. Cutner says that Taylor attacked the Jesus of the Gospels. Well, well! Seeing that the Gospels were preserved by ecclesiastical authorities, that they were forged and interpolated, and finally preserved *after* the Christ myth had been completed and stereotyped, I fail to see how this statement refutes my assertion. The Gospels did not exist prior to the finished Christ myth, but rather rounded off that interesting product of greed and imposture.

Mr. Cutner says Taylor quotes authorities prior to the sixth century. Well, well! The Christ myth was growing between the first and sixth centuries. But neither Taylor nor anyone else can prove that the Christ believed in in the sixth century was the Christ believed in in the first century. I again quote from memory, but I challenge Mr. Cutner to re-read *Diegesis*. What Taylor proves is: (1) Some early Christian heretics believed in the Christ principle, held there was a sort of divine phantom, but no historic person. (2) Others denied the Christ but held that Jesus was human. As a matter of information, I should be quite pleased to state clearly in the columns of the *Freethinker* the opinions and propaganda activity of every Christian sect from the first to the sixth centuries.

When Mr. Cutner refuses a debate on the ground that the only Jesus he knows anything about is the Jesus of the Gospels, the argument is too Christian to be an argument at all. The Gospels are a growth and possess a history. There may have been a Jesus and still the Gospel records may be so false and misleading that he bears no relation to the Gospel Jesus. All men, I beg again to remind Mr Cutner, become myths both to their friends and to their enemies. Wise biography seeks to discard the falsehood and unearth the truth. Suppose I was to say: "I will not discuss whether Thomas Paine existed, but the only Thomas Paine I know is the Thomas Paine of such and such a book," knowing that the book was inaccurate either from malice or affection. Suppose I argued like that about Caesar or Napoleon or Cromwell. It may be that there never was a Jesus. The only true way of settling that problem is to discover (a) how much of the alleged miraculous Christ is stolen from the Pagan deities; (b) how much was engrafted by interest during the centuries; (c) exactly what, generation by generation, did men believe and understand about a teacher called Jesus. This has no relation to a Jesus Christ emanating from my brain, for I am quite impartial in the matter. It would discover, that is, exhibit, the actual growth of the Christian idea. To do this is to be useful and scientific. To remain stagnant, accepting the Bible as a perfect and absolute book, just to worship it by our attacks, is to make no progress whatever.

Mr. Cutner should know that my pamphlet on *The Rebel and His Disciples,* published in 1912, has been re-issued, entirely rewritten and republished as *Communism and Religion.* There are some important variations and corrections. But the main conclusions stand.

I distinctly deny that Jesus was a Communist in the scientific sense, and I explain that he was a theo-maniac. Mr. Cutner should note points like these when striving to build up an extravagant house of cards. I pay no excessive adoration to Jesus. I applaud one characteristic—sincerity, integrity, single-eyedness of purpose. I applaud that equally in Richard Carlile or any other agitator,

martyr or philosopher. It is a custom of Freethinkers to applaud Socrates as against Jesus. Well, Nietzsche attacks Socrates and ridicules the adoration paid to him. The attack is clever and may be well taken. I admire and applaud it. But it will not cause me to think any the less of Socrates as an honest old nuisance and brave enquirer after truth. Nevertheless, in common with other Freethinkers, I may be wrong and Nietzsche may be right. Jesus falls into a similar category if he lived. If he did not live, the argument cannot be concluded by dancing a jig in the light of the Gospel records only.

I have not read Canon Cheyne. I will do so. If he converts me I will say so. What matters it to me to believe that Jesus lived if he did not? Mr. Cutner is not causing me any anxiety. Of course, Canon Cheyne is only regarded as an authority for the perverted reason that his scholastic declarations are contrary to his ecclesiastical standing. I think that kind of "authority" humorous. But Mr. Cutner may deem it solemn and impressive.

It is nonsense to argue that I give no authorities. Part of my argument is based on a critical analysis of the biblical text. Obviously no authority is needed here. Part is based on the decisions of the Church Councils. As all historians are agreed on these councils, their dates, and controversies, authorities are not necessary. One has only to look up the various records and standard references. Part of the argument is based on the opinions of the heresiarchs. These also can be looked up. If my statements are false they can be challenged. The truth is I have not made the most of my data. Eusebius, for example, with all his forgeries, did not believe Jesus to be God nor *the* Son of God. I merely put these facts of early Christian thought together.

Gibbon quotes authorities. They may impress novices, but do they help anyone? Many of his authorities are gibberish. Buckle wearies one with his authorities that merely make another book. Discrepancies can be challenged always and authorities cited or discussed. But to have a running commentary of authorities argues an ignorant reading public, a suspicion of one's own case, and a jargon of learning that may impose more successfully than naked statements. The discussion of authorities may prove a useful appendix to a book. But there is no need to include them otherwise. I can cite authorities, the very best, for all my facts. But Mr. Cutner can unearth the same facts himself without any trouble.

Mr. Cutner thinks he has said the last word when he objects to my toast to Jesus — which is only a rhetorical flourish eulogising humanity. Has he never read Max Stirner? Stirner argues very well that *humanity* is a myth, and insists on his right to have no myths, not even humanity, but to live for his *own* ego. Stirner thinks that *that* is Atheism. And perhaps Stirner is right. Mr. Cutner should not destroy one myth to substitute another. He

should remember the magnificent fable about the fetters on the right and left leg told by the immortal Robert Louis Stevenson.

Thought and speculation should make us tentative at times in our reasoning. And when we destroy gods we should smash them all. Humanity, the abstraction, may prove as intolerable as Jesus, the emanation of excited imagination. I make Jesus in my image and Mr. Cutner makes humanity in his. We will destroy both and strive for egoism. What says Mr. Cutner in the name of Atheism?

GUY A. ALDRED.

November 25, 1925.

Sir,—This shall be my last letter.

Mr. Cutner says that the words "the phenomena of the heavens" do not occur in the *Prolegomena* to Taylor's *Diegesis*. All I said was that this introductory chapter "fully justifies my contention that Taylor attacked the finished Christ myth." In a previous letter I assert that Taylor proves Christ to be "a plagiarism from Pagan saviours," etc. As a matter of fact Taylor devotes at least one chapter to this. Mr. Cutner is employing a phrase only to avert facing a fact. He evades the real challenge entirely, however many times he has re-read the *Diegesis*. Let any Freethinker read this splendid work and then deny that Taylor maintained that the personality of Christ was borrowed from Pagan sources and attacked the finished myth. If Taylor's work were as little pointed as Mr. Cutner seems to believe, it would be as worthless as it is now invaluable.

Mr. Cutner's reference to Thomas Paine is unfortunate. Does he not know that, politically, some persons view Paine as an extremist, whilst others deem him a revisionist and reactionist? Theologically, Paine is denounced as an infidel and acclaimed as a religionist. He is, supposedly, a pioneer of reason. But Carlile pointed out that Paine was, in many matters, a lamentable superstitionist. We have the case also of Spinoza, depicted by some as a blaspheming Atheist, deemed by others the "God-intoxicated philosopher." And so on, right through the records of biography, of course, Jesus is idealised by various folk after their own imaginings. But that does not affect his existence or otherwise. Even the list Mr. Cutner gives is not contradictory. There is something wrong with your correspondent's vision when he ranks poetry and oratory, which are arts or achievements or gifts, with Spiritualism and Bolshevism, which are opinions. A little more science in thinking would not be amiss.

My reference to Buckle and Gibbon remain good, and my comment has the support of some of the greatest scholars, critics, and historians the world has known. I should not canvass early

Christian opinions by an effort of memory. I understand their main outline from actual understanding of thought evolution. I should fill in the special details by consulting various authorities and records. But to cite them all is unnecessary when one is discussing with a person who can consult definite decisions and authorities for himself. Mr. Cutner should not need me to place Church Councils and such like for him. Certain epochs should be well-frequented and familiar thoroughfares and not need signposts as though they were situated a thousand miles from the outposts of human understanding.

The *Rebel and His Disciples* is not called in. It has been revised and republished as *Communism and Religion.* A rhetorical flourish may centre about a real contention and indicate a definite bias. Mine does. Humanity, Mr. Cutner, though against your prejudice, is also a myth. For, after all, what is humanity? Men no more agree on this abstraction than on any other. Truth is always worth discussing. I have known ministers to declare that God should not be discussed. However, what with Malthus and the pure Gospel story, I think Mr. Cutner has very full hands and we will place humanity on the shelf meantime.

Modern criticism does not assign the Gospel records to A.D. 150. They are much later. Does Mr. Cutner not know about the catechisers and the oral tradition as distinct from the written word? The Gospel records may be the present source of our knowledge of Christ. But how and by whom were those records preserved? There is only one Omar to-day—Fitzgerald's. But there were *more* than one before Fitzgerald. And the Gospel records, edited, purged, interpolated, represent the finished myth imposed by power on the human intellect by the sixth century. That century closes an era for all who understand ecclesiastical history.

My challenge to debate stands.

GUY A. ALDRED.

Daily Record, Glasgow, June, 1927.

MILES MALLESON'S, "THE FANATICS."

A scathing attack was made by the Rev. A. C. Hill, D.D., on this play in Elgin Place Congregational Church, and reported in the *Daily Record,* for June 13, 1927.

Tuesday, June 14, 1927.

FOR THE DEFENCE

Sir,—I see that the Rev. A. C. Hill, speaking in Elgin Place Congregational Church, Glasgow, has attacked Miles Malleson's play, "The Fanatics."

I just missed seeing this play when it was produced first in London, but I saw it at the Royal on Saturday. I do not say that the play is so extraordinary as many of its friends suggest, but, even if it is a trifle commonplace here and there, it is one of the most useful, educative, and thought-stimulating plays that has been staged in recent years.

Dr. Hill's comments are dull, tawdry, and worthless. They are the comments of a man who believes in blinding himself to facts.

"The Fanatics" is true to life. It is neither tawdry nor contemptible. However, I issue this challenge to Dr. Hill. I am prepared to defend this play in public debate. To assert its usefulness and value. I challenge Dr. Hill to such debate. It can be organised in the City or St. Andrew's Halls, and the proceeds after meeting expenses, can be devoted to some public work *not* offensive to the conscience of either of the participants.

GUY A. ALDRED.

13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow.

June 21, 1927.

A CHALLENGE REFUSED.

Sir,—A Mr. Guy A. Aldred challenges me to a debate on the merits of "The Fanatics." Regretfully I must deny myself the rapture of hearing him expound his ideas. He appears to need a platform. I do not. I have one.

If he can persuade people to build a church for him and maintain it, he will be as free as the rest of us to state his views.

He says my opinions are dull, tawdry, and worthless. His selection of epithets implies a confusion of mind unfortunate in a critic. A tawdry thing is showily ornamental. A dull thing is dim, tarnished, obscure. To combine these qualities in one and the same thing would be a feat worthy of admiration.

That my opinions should be dull, however, need not disturb me. There is a class of person who, having seduced his niece and murdered his grandmother, would complain that the advocate who prosecuted him was not eloquent, the judge who sentenced him was not witty. Did not Wainwright say that he killed a girl because she had thick ankles? I do not carry my aestheticism so far.

Without anxiety as to whether my opinions are dull, I desire that my ideas should be just and my utterance plain. I commend the example to Mr. Guy Aldred. His brief communication indicates that he needs it.

A. C. HILL.

Elgin Place Church, Glasgow.

June 22, 1927.

"THE CLERIC AS CRITIC."

Sir,—I note the Rev. A. C. Hill's answer in Tuesday's *Daily Record*. Mr. Hill's attempt at sarcasm, to cover up the fact that he dare not debate, is a most interesting study in brotherly and Christian argument.

I like that complaisant and complacent "I have a platform." It is a great pity that the Mr. Hills of the world, having platforms, do not make better use of them in the war against social misery, murder by war and disease, poverty and crime. It is not what Mr. Hill has but the use that he makes of it that counts.

I imagine the Pharisees of old answering Jesus of Nazareth like that, the persecutors saying the same kind of thing to John Huss, Martin Luther, and the saintly Michael Servetus.

Mr. Hill need write no more. He has confessed enough, and I go forward to my Church, not erected by human hands, to proclaim my message to the common people, whilst Mr. Hill gazes on the walls of his church and mistakes the magnificence of the building for the importance of the message.

GUY A. ALDRED.

West London Observer, January 10, 1930.

GUY ALDRED'S FATHER.

INFORMATION WANTED.

Mr. Guy A. Aldred, of Bakunin House, 13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, N.W., writes:—

To the Editor.

Dear Sir,—I am addressing myself to you as one who was long resident in Hammersmith, a regular reader of your paper, in whose

columns my name appeared often in connection with my Socialistic activities in West London from 1909 to 1924, and even as late as 1926.

In 1889 or 1890, when I was between three and four years of age, my father deserted my mother and I never learned his whereabout. I became anxious as the years went by, to find him, not to attack him, although I would never have deserted my child as he deserted me, but rather to know him, to forgive him, and be friendly with him.

I have just learned from his brother and my uncle Ben Aldred, now an inmate of Broadmoor Asylum, that my father, Arthur Alfred Aldred, died at the Middlesex Hospital in February, 1928. He had adopted the name of Arthur Rosebery, and was at that time manager of the "Elephant and Castle" Theatre, and formerly he had been manager at a Hammersmith theatre. His age was then 63. Apparently he had been resident in Hammersmith at the same time as myself and must have known me, although I did not know him.

My father was a playwright and had been a naval officer. I would be grateful to anyone who has kept any Press cuttings concerning him or possesses any pictures of him. I would like to collect and publish his MSS. and I want to know as much about him as possible. Some of his relatives live in Africa and any African readers might get in touch with them.

GUY A. ALDRED.

This request for information still stands.

Daily Record, Glasgow, Saturday, July 4, 1931.

FREE SPEECH ON GLASGOW GREEN.

To the Editor of the *Record and Mail.*

Sir,—I should be grateful if you would accord me space in which to express admiration for the attitude adopted in the matter of the tramp preachers and the question of unlicensed liberty of speech, meeting, and assembly on Glasgow Green by the Rev. John M'Millan.

All that Mr. M'Millan says in your columns is true, and it is amazing to me that it is not appreciated.

It is a pity that a Protestant speaker should attack Mr. M'Millan for associating with myself in defence of the tramp

preachers. So-called Christians and so-called Atheists have associated in many bad causes. Why should not I stand side by side with Mr. M'Millan in the cause of human freedom? Why must the Protestant lecturer in question always see devils where none exist?

To win the case for free speech, I am prepared to meet in debate anyone who challenges the right of Protestant ministers or others to stand on the same platform as myself. The proceeds can go to some common purpose in which citizens may agree — say, hospitals.

Glasgow. GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, Glasgow, July 13, 1931.

THE GLASGOW GREEN BY-LAW.

13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, N.W.

Sir,—I should be glad if you would permit me to put the following facts before your readers concerning By-law No. 20 restricting by permit singing, preaching, lecturing, etc., on Glasgow Green, etc.

The re-enaction of the by-law in 1927 was not the result of any abuse of the by-law by any speaker. It arose simply from the refusal of the police to deal with another question that had no relation to public meetings. In no other city have the police ventured to suggest that public speaking and the selling of racing tips are identical. Yet this was done in Glasgow.

The reason for the re-enacting of the restrictive by-law, in all its pristine beauty, is to be found in the minute of the Sub-Committee on Parks, Open Spaces, etc., north of River Clyde, of date November 29, 1926, page 298-9, Print No. 4. Space does not permit its citation at length in your columns, but your readers can consult it at the Mitchell Library. It proves that the grounds for the by-law have no relation to the terms of the by-law.

I suppose betting touts exist in Edinburgh as well as Glasgow, yet Edinburgh specially sets aside meeting-places for the free use of citizens, and encounters no difficulty in the matter.

You may remember that in November, 1924, I carried this case of Glasgow Green to the High Court of Justiciary. The case is reported in the various Justiciary reports for November 28, 1924, as "Aldred v. Miller." It was heard by the Lord Justice-Clerk and Lords Hunter and Anderson. The Lord Justice-Clerk and Lord Hunter, whilst upholding the by-law, complained of its terms, and both judges recommended the Glasgow Magistrates to alter the terms of their permit. No notice whatever has been taken of this suggestion.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, July 23, 1931.

A TRADITION NOT TO BE SACRIFICED.

13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, N.W.

Sir,—I draw attention to the report of Mr. Adamson's reply in Parliament to the questions concerning free speech on Glasgow Green. The Secretary for Scotland says permits are refused rarely. This is not true; but why should they be refused at all?

I draw attention to Sir Patrick Ford's question, which justified the by-laws and the permits, in order to prevent certain opinions being advocated. What right has any Council or any Government by any system of permits to prevent opinions that a ruling faction does not agree with being advocated? Free speech, unlicensed liberty of speech, is a tradition handed down to us by John Milton, John Bunyan, and Richard Carlile. It is one we are not going to sacrifice.

Speaking and writing personally, I am prepared to carry the fight for free speech through every court in the land. I believe neither in the Municipal Council nor Parliament under the prevailing economic system. But my views may be wrong. Free speech is fundamental to the discovery of truth, and cannot be wrong. If this question is not settled before November I suggest a complete liquidation of all differences of view and a united council of action to sweep from the Council every councillor standing for the suppression of free speech and the present iniquitous by-laws. There must be restored to the people of Glasgow, without compromise or qualification, unrestricted freedom of assembly and of speech.

Sir Patrick Ford's attitude, in vulgar parlance, gives the game away. If these people believe in licensed speech let them debate it on the public platform. I challenge such debate. The proceeds could go to some public object in which neither party had any personal interest. I assert, without fear of contradiction, the permit system is iniquitous and destroys free speech. Who will contend otherwise in full and open debate?—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Daily Record, Glasgow, January 27, 1932.

DARTMOOR MUTINY.

To the Editor of the *Record and Mail*

Sir,—I daresay mine will be a voice crying in the wilderness, but I do venture a word of protest against your suggestion that prisoners are pampered in prison. Some regard should be paid to the reaction of human psychology under conditions of slavery, and

that is what our criminal system is. It is absurd to suggest that a person has no humanity in him, no human rights or feelings, because, for the time being, he is a convict.

Future generations will gaze back appalled at our present prison system and all its ignominies and senseless brutalities. Above all, its criminal uselessness and play-acting idleness.

When the inquiry is held into the Dartmoor business, it is to be hoped that not just the official view will prevail. I say nothing against the officials; but the official view is not necessarily the sound view, nor the most helpful one. The prisoners' view has a right to be understood, sensed, analysed, and represented as well.

I write as one who has suffered in all eight years' imprisonment in British jails in England and Scotland. I have studied the history and evolution of the prison system both here and in America.

GUY A. ALDRED.

13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow.

Evening Times, June 10, 1932.

FREE SPEECH ON GLASGOW GREEN.

13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, N.W.

Sir,—I should not intrude upon your columns but for the publication in them of the ridiculous "disclaimer" signed by Joe Gerrard, as Glasgow organiser of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Of course, I have never been a member of the Communist Party. But I have been a Communist writer, lecturer and agitator since 1906, which is a few years before the Russian Revolution, and, therefore, a few years before it became fashionable to be styled a "Communist."

The Communist Party has never maintained the right to hold meetings on Glasgow Green. In 1924, when I was fighting this right, and spoke at the Monument without a permit, the Communist Party staged a counter-demonstration with a permit, at which W. Gallacher was a speaker. When, more recently, it did speak without a permit, it was only after first applying for a permit on each occasion. Its attack upon me is undiluted hypocrisy.

The amendment of the by-law, if properly interpreted does not commit one to accepting the bandstand if it is found unsuitable. It does open up the public parks and open spaces of Glasgow to public meetings without permits.

I am not particular as to exact sites. But I stand where I always did, for unlicensed liberty of speech and of the right of propaganda. If suitable sites are granted for this purpose throughout the city, I am satisfied. If this is not done, I am prepared to

fight for such sites. The question of the sites is a matter of planning and arrangement. Public meeting is not the only purpose to which open spaces should be put. But it is a very important one. The question is a practical one to be solved by common sense.—

I am, etc,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, June 13, 1932.

SHORT AND SWEET.

Workers' Bookshop, 258 High Street,
Glasgow, C.4.

Sir,—Mr. Aldred is wrong. I have never spoken at the Nelson Monument with a permit.—I am, etc.,

WILLIAM GALLACHER.

Evening Times, June 15, 1932.

SPEAKING ON GLASGOW GREEN.

13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, N.W.

Sir,—Replying to Mr. William Gallacher's letter in Monday night's *Times,* Mr. Gallacher spoke on Glasgow Green with a permit at the Monument on Sunday, August 3, 1924. I spoke there the same day and time at a rival meeting without a permit.

Mr. Gallacher attacked me for doing so in the Communist Party organ edited by Mr. Aitken Ferguson, six days later. A week later a further attack was made upon me in the Communist Party organ for speaking at the Monument without a permit.

I did not start this controversy, and have no wish to continue it. Will you please publish this as my last word.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Daily Record, Glasgow, August 15, 1932.

BYE-LAW REVISED.

Sir,—Bye-Law No. 20, as revised, authorises the Glasgow Corporation and the Parks Committee to set aside spaces for public meetings, without permits, in *all* the public parks of Glasgow.

To apply it only to Glasgow Green is a breach of faith with the public and contrary to the reasoning of counsel for the Corporation in the High Court against myself in both the 1924 and 1931 cases. Instead of arresting the persons at Queen's Park, and commencing a new struggle, the Parks Committee should set aside immediately spaces in the parks.

GUY A. ALDRED.

13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, N.W.

Letters to the Editor

The Evening Citizen, Glasgow, July 22, 1933.

DR. ISAAC WATTS.

Sir,—I was very pleased indeed to notice your account of Dr. Isaac Watts in Monday's issue. Dr. Watts was born on July 17, 1674, at Southampton, and died on November 25, 1748. I would have liked to have seen a few more details of his life, however.

The father of Dr. Watts was a schoolmaster. He was an Independent, and suffered constant imprisonment for Nonconformity. On one occasion the infant Isaac was nursed by his mother whilst she sat on a stone outside the jail in which her husband was imprisoned. At the age of 16 Isaac refused an opportunity to be educated at the Universities because he would not conform to the Church.

I think that your notice should have made clear that Dr. Watts closed his life a Unitarian. At the famous Salters' Hall Conference of the three denominations he refused to sign any creed not expressed in the words of Scripture. Watts wanted to remove all Trinitarian expressions from his hymns, but was prevented by his publisher and the copyright laws. He said so to Henry Grove in the presence of Dr. Amory. He adopted the Sabellian hypothesis of the "indwelling" of the Father in the human Jesus. He held this view till 1727. Afterwards he accepted the frank humanity of Jesus.

Three years before he died Dr. Watts wrote a tract against the Trinity, in which he declares that, throughout the whole New Testament, there is no controversy among the primitive Christians about the Trinity; no special labour taken to explain it; no cautions or directions given about the manner of conceiving it; no errors about it refuted; no hard questions asked of the apostles on the subject. Neither Jesus nor his apostles gave the least hint to Jew or Gentile that they must change their natural and rational ideas concerning the Oneness of God. Dr. Watts added that he knew of no place in Scripture requiring the believer to adore the Holy Spirit as a God, or to mention it in an expression of personal address in either prayer or praise.

GUY A. ALDRED.

The Evening Times, Glasgow. Date of issue appears above each letter.

The first letter also appeared in the "Evening Citizen" for August 3, 1933. It drew forth, in both papers, great abuse of Ingersoll, and the statement, made by a foolish Christian apologist, that Christians, throughout America, were opposed to chattel slavery. The second letter indicates his argument.

August 2, 1933.

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

Sir,—I am surprised at no mention being made in the Press of this country of the coming centenary of the birth of Robert Green Ingersoll. Colonel Ingersoll was one of the greatest of English-speaking orators. He was born at Dresden, in the State of New York, on August 11, 1833. He died at Dobbs Ferry, New York, on July 21, 1899. Apart from being a distinguished freethinker, Ingersoll was in many respects a great, if somewhat conventional, man. His orations will live in literature as long as our language lasts. His opinions cost him the Governorship of the State of Illinois and also the post of Ambassador to Germany. He was always the friend of the persecuted and oppressed. He offered shelter to Frederick Douglas, the slave orator, when no hotel would take him in and no Christian minister even would give him a bed.

Defending his action at Lincoln Hall, October 22, 1883, Ingersoll said:—"I am inferior to any man whose rights I trample under foot." At the same meeting he declared:—"The superior man is the providence of the inferior. He is eyes for the blind, strength for the weak, and a shield for the defenceless. He stands erect by bending above the fallen. He rises by lifting others."

GUY A. ALDRED.

August 12, 1933.

Sir,—When I addressed my letter to you re the centenary of Ingersoll's birth I had no thought of controversy. Apparently your correspondent, John Drinnan, is content to see men and women physically all shapes and sizes, but he objects to any variety in their psychology. They must be all of one mind; or, better still, of no mind at all.

Mr. Drinnan wants to know where Ingersoll was in the battle between the North and the South. I suggest that he reads Ingersoll's "Life," by Handford, published in 1899. On the platform and on the field of battle, although he objected to war and all shooting, Ingersoll was fighting for the abolition of slavery. To state that he was with the pro-slavery party is merely one of those ridiculous lies invented by people who call themselves Christians for the purpose of humiliating their opponents. Ingersoll was on the side of Lincoln all the time, and was the author of the most famous oration ever delivered in memory of that great American President.

I do not know how many Christians were on the side of the emancipation of the slaves. What I do know is that the Southern slave-holders called themselves Christians; that Christian statesmen and politicians in Britain were prepared to uphold the cause of the

South against the North to their lasting shame and disgrace; that the Presbyterian and other churches flourished midst slavery and upheld it. Theodore Parker and Emerson, who were opposed to slavery, were denied the titles of Christians whilst alive, however they may rank to-day. The only great outstanding Christian on the side of abolition was the immortal John Brown, of Harper's Ferry, Presbyterian hero, and lover of his fellow-man, black or white. Abraham Lincoln himself was, as every honest person knows, a Freethinker.

As to Mr. Drinnan's statement that there was nothing outstanding about Ingersoll's thought, I would refer your readers to Ingersoll's Collected Works, published in 12 volumes in 1900. They contain some of the most beautiful writing in our language.

Thomas Paine, to whom Mr. Drinnan refers, also wrote some of the most trenchant and magnificent sentences in English political literature. Many of his passages have passed into our languge without even being quoted. Their beauty and their force have become proverbial.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, July 28, 1934.

FREE SPEECH STONES OF LEEDS.

Sir,—I am writing from Leeds, where I am concluding several days' propaganda on behalf of the United Socialist Movement. In view of the struggle for free speech in Glasgow, and the revision of By-law 20, and the failure of the Parks Committee to enforce it in all the public parks, I would like to call attention to the fact that in Leeds in all the public parks and open spaces, there is a large space set aside by the Parks Committee for public meetings, and in such spaces large square blocks of stones are erected to speak from. In the Victoria Square the speakers speak from the several monuments there. It seems to me absurd that Glasgow should be behind Leeds in this matter. I might add that, whatever its faults, the Labour Party conducts regular propaganda in all these open spaces and is keen on such propaganda. And I am as critical of the Labour Party in Leeds as in Glasgow.

Another feature of this city is the fact that on all the car routes, at all points where the cars stop, where an actual shelter has not been erected for passengers to queue up for different cars, two signposts (movable) are placed in the road marked "safety zone," and other traffic has to respect this zone. This must be of great service to passengers. School children have halfpenny fares, and can go return journeys, changing during holidays to public parks and

country spaces, for one penny. This argues poverty. Within the limits of the system, it gives the children a chance. I would add that Leeds has a magnificent library, and certainly offers great opportunity of literary and philosophical culture to those who wish to study. But it has terrible slums, most horrid poverty, and, I think, despite its beauty spots, much general squalor.

The points I have mentioned are in its favour. And the free speech stones are worthy of note. I commend them to the I.L.P. and Labour Councillors on the Parks Committee.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, March 15, 1935.

INVASION OF CIVIL RIGHTS.

Sir,—As one who is known as a Communist but has never belonged to the Communist Party, and also as one who has long been keenly interested in American literature and politics, holding that American traditions were real British traditions, I was amazed to read of the detention of Mr. John Strachey at Chicago after a lecture.

The other evening I was reading an edition of the writings of William Morris, printed in New York, which included his famous essay on Communism. Are we to understand that while the writings of William Morris can be circulated in America with impunity Morris himself, if he were still in the flesh, would be debarred from speaking there? In 1933 an American Communist named Schachtman was to speak in Montreal, but the New York 'bus was stopped at Philipsburg and Schachtman was turned back, merely because of the accident that he was born in America. I remember reading in the *Evening Times* about two years ago the protest of an American Episcopalian clergyman, who was lecturing in Britain at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and actually regarded himself almost as a citizen—a perfectly natural and human error. Apparently he was arrested because he had lectured without reporting all his movements to the police authorities.

Merely for the sake of a war on words, is the American Government going to forget, and are the British authorities going to forget, that English-speaking traditions of America and Britain are really one in the matter of liberty; that blood is thicker than water, and stronger also than political barriers? The persons who have stopped Mr. Strachey from speaking should remember that when those of us who were unfortunately born in Britain read Abraham Lincoln, or recall the traditions of Washington, and why the name

"American" was first used, we realise that we are thinking and speaking in the root terms of the English language and traditions. The war on civil liberties is not a defence of American traditions, but an attack on the rights of the human race.

The word "Communism" did not originate with the Russian Revolution, and is, indeed, one of the oldest words in use in any language. It is absurd, therefore, to say that a man must not be permitted to visit America, or an American must not be permitted to visit Britain, merely because he has called himself, in speech or writing, a Communist.

I am sending this protest to you not because I am a Communist but because I resent every invasion of civil rights and because I think it is the right of every member of the English-speaking race to do so.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, March 20, 1935.

THE RIGHT OF PUBLIC MEETING.

Sir,—Now that traffic conditions are changed in Glasgow and the introduction of traffic signal lamps tends to make street speaking more and more impossible, except in out-of-the-way byways where one may conflict with the residents, may I ask why the Parks Committee of the Corporation refrain from implementing the revised by-law No. 20? This revised by-law, which can be seen in all the public parks, was confirmed by Sheriff-Principal MacKenzie on June 8, 1932. The Sheriff-Principal, in confirming it, stated:—"The by-law proposed impliedly authorises the Corporation to set apart by notice places (note the plural) where preaching and lecturing may proceed without permits first being obtained."

According to the Transport Department's Glasgow Handbook, there are 35 public parks in Glasgow. Is not public speaking a desirable and useful recreation? Can it not be recreation in the best sense of re-creation? Is it not a tradition of the English-speaking race? Why, then, is this by-law, fought for in the police courts and High Court in 1924 and 1931, and granted in 1932, not put into operation?

It seems to me that the failure to operate this by-law is a grave dereliction of duty, as well as a serious negation of principle, on the part of the Labour-Socialist majority in the Town Council. One expected some regard for the right of public meeting from this faction.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Capital Punishment

Evening Times, June 28, 1935.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

145 Queen Street, Glasgow, C.1.

Sir,—With reference to the attitude of the Glasgow magistrates towards the question of execution, and the Town Clerk's explanation, one recognises the dilemma in which Messrs. Muir Simpson and John Murdoch found themselves, but why not have maintained their stand, despite the threat of penalties for the entire magistracy? This would have brought the matter of capital punishment, which is pure barbarism, to a head. Capital punishment does not prevent murder for reasons that every intelligent citizen appreciates. There are errors of judgment, of deduction, and of indiction from circumstantial evidence, because no one knows all the facts; and a life once taken can never be replaced. Two blacks do not make a white, and the most callous murder can never be more brutal than the calculated task of execution.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, Saturday, August 24, 1935.

THE COMING WAR.

145 Queen Street, Glasgow, C.1.

Sir,—There can be no doubt that war is inevitable. Civilisation is menaced with war and Fascism. The great question is—What are the citizens of Britain going to do? It is not merely a question of Government, or of Cabinet meetings and Parliamentary opposition. It is a question for the citizens, collectively and individually. War is on us. Where now are the Socialists, the Communists, and the Christians? I say "and the Christians" because Christianity itself is opposed to war.

There should be a complete and representative organisation of Glasgow citizens. There should be fearless open discussion. We have been drifting towards war, and our principles and ethics are stagnant. Now every platform and every pulpit should become alive to end chaos. I know where I stand, and I should like to get in contact with every citizen of like determined opposition to war. This monster must be stopped somewhere and somehow, and I do not see why the English-speaking people should hesitate at arresting the progress of war. It is the easiest thing in the world to end war if the individual citizen has character and courage.

I wish to ask every genuine Socialist, Communist, humanist, and Christian to unite against war. Had the Christian world believed

in Christian ethics, had it preached the miracle of life instead of wearying us with the miracles of theology, war would be impossible. To my mind war is murder, and mankind cannot tolerate murder. Before I die I hope to see the end of war as a factor in human development and existence.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, September 1, 1935.

EXCUSE OF EVERY MILITARIST.

145 Queen Street, Glasgow, C.1.

Sir,—In a Sunday contemporary Mr. George Lansbury, using pacifist and anti-war phraseology, pledges the Labour Party to support the Government if it calls for sanctions against Italy. The call for sanctions against Italy is pious nonsense if it is known in advance that the other members of the League do not intend to approve of sanctions. But if the British call for sanctions means that Britain is to impose sanctions whether the other nations agree or not, then the attitude of the British Government approaches dangerously near a declaration of war. Indeed, if the British Government did not declare war the Italian Government might well do so.

So that when Mr. Lansbury identifies the Labour Party with the policy of sanctions he is actually committing the working-class to the support of a Capitalist Government and war. He is not supporting the cause of peace. It is quite true that he describes the horrors of war and asks the Christian Churches to oppose war. But actually what he means is that they should oppose Italian war and therefore support war.

I do not object to Mr. Lansbury saying that Italian agression is wrong and that the only answer to it is war. I do not object to him plunging the workers of the world into war if he thinks that is the only way. I do not object to the Labour Party once more turning to militarism and patriotism if that is its nature and if it sees no other way of being realistic. But I do object to Mr. Lansbury plumping for war and at the same time pretending that he is standing for peace. After all, that is and has been the excuse of every militarist in the world.

I have no sympathy with the Italian aggression. But I do not see how another world war will save mankind from such aggression —if not by Italy by some other Power. And I do not see why the blood of the working-class of Britain should be shed in the cause of the Abyssinian Empereor or why their lives should be pledged by the so-called political leaders without any attempt at consulting them.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, October 19, 1935.

MR. MAXTON'S ATTITUDE.

Sir,—Mr. M'Shane's comment on Mr. Maxton's attitude towards the present war situation merely means that the Stalinist party which he serves openly backs Imperialist sanctions. The League of Nations serves no different purpose to-day from what it did ten years ago, when the 14th party conference of the Communist Party of Russia denounced it as an instrument of war and spoke of the crime of the Second International in supporting it. When one compares the C.P. International press correspondence of that period and of to-day one realises how much froth this Communist Party propaganda has been. There is no difference between the circumstances of 1914 and those that prevail to-day. If M'Shane's policy is correct, then the C.P. has been wrong in all its past attacks on British navalism and militarism, for it is obvious that those who cried for a powerful British Navy were the real defenders of the League of Nations and its policy of sanctions.

The attitude of Mr. Maxton is correct. To-day, the I.L.P. has adopted the correct Socialist attitude. Every lover of peace must line up either with the I.L.P. or with Mr. George Lansbury in opposition to this war. This does not ignore the fact that Mr. Lansbury has much to apologise for and that the I.L.P., in its flirtations with Stalinisms, has committed grievous errors. To-day, however, this is wiped on one side by the need of a united front against war. And a united front against war means an I.L.P. coalition and not a C.P.-Labour Party one. The criticism of the C.P.'s war attitude made recently by John M'Govern and by Thomas Johnston are correct.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, October 22, 1935.

MR. M'SHANE AND MR. MAXTON'S ATTITUDE.

Sir,—In replying to my criticism of Mr. Maxton's attitude on the Italo-Abyssinian question, Mr. Aldred makes the amazing statement that "there is no difference between the circumstances of 1914 and those that prevail to-day." Why, this very discussion would have been impossible in 1914. Who ever heard of sanctions in 1914? The Soviet Union, the League of Nations, and Fascism are all powerful factors in the present situation. How is it possible to decide on a policy for the Socialist movement without first of all finding out the part these factors play in world affairs? We did not have this problem in 1914.

I do not need to be told that the League of Nations is overwhelmingly composed of capitalist nations. It is perfectly true that these nations are no different from what they were ten years ago. But again there are changed circumstances. We have the spectacle of the nations most anxious for war finding it more convenient for them to be outside the League. We have that great factor for peace, the Soviet Union, joining the League. Should Socialists not take these things into account? It would be better if Mr. Maxton would take more notice of what the international movement has to say on questions of this kind. Why not? Meantime, every Socialist should be doing all he can to stop the war against Abyssinia. This does not mean that we support the Imperialist aims of any capitalist country. We continue to fight Imperialist war, but we change our tactics to suit the circumstances.

I am, etc.,

H. M'SHANE,

Evening Times, Saturday, October 26, 1935.

ON THE THRESHOLD OF FASCISM.

Sir,—I have only just noticed Mr. M'Shane's letter replying to mine of October 19. The difference between the conditions obtaining in 1914 and those of to-day are merely superficial. Of course, every decade brings its own excuses and its own peculiar phrasings for war. Fundamentally, the class conditions remain the same, and the nature and purpose of war continue unaltered. The policy for the Socialist movement that was decided upon by the Communist Party and the Labour Party is not dictated by the changed conditions of militarism and class society but by the total abandonment of principle by the Labour movement. The present policy of sanctions and, on the part of the Communist Party, of military sanctions, is a policy of militarism which is the logic of Parliamentarism. It only means that the British workers are being prepared for a National Government of some kind and Fascism, and that Parliamentary Socialism, Left and Right, has decided to support the principles of empire and militarism and to repudiate the class struggle.

The changed conditions are in the policy of the Soviet Union. In 1927 I protested against Mr. Wheatley having Mr. Arthur Henderson on his platform. At that time the Communist Party also jeered at Mr. Henderson, and the so-called Communist press was attacking him constantly. Now the Communist Party pays its tribute to Mr. Henderson for doing the very things for which, formerly, it had attacked him. It is obvious that the changes in the Communist International and the Labour Party proceed not from

an altered capitalist society but from an altered political machine. Economically, the class struggle continues. Politically, the so-called machinery of fighting that struggle has been scrapped by those who control the levers. Actually, Britain stands on the threshold of Fascism, thanks to the activities of the Labour and Communist Parties. A National Government is inevitable in the future, and the idea of a continued Labour Parliamentary Opposition is doomed.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, October 29, 1935.

A UNITED FRONT AGAINST FASCISM.

Sir,—It is remarkable how Mr. Aldred has drifted from a defence of such Parliamentarians as Mr. Maxton and Mr. Lansbury to a strong attack on Parliamentary Socialism. Mr. Aldred, as is usual with him, makes a vigorous attack on the Communist Party, but it is an attack which will not be taken seriously by those who know the attitude of that party to militarism and Parliamentarianism. When we demand sanctions it is not because we want war but because we want to stop war. The mass of the workers know this to be true. We want to prevent the National Government from going back, so we support the Labour Party. What is Mr. Aldred going to do? He just says a National Government is inevitable. We want to prevent Fascism, so we ask the I.L.P. and the Labour Party to form a united front against Fascism. By making these efforts we play our part in the class struggle. The Communist Party, while perhaps changing its tactical line, does not desert or conceal its fundamental principles. Because it is prepared to make such tactical changes it stands out as the only consistent revolutionary party in the country. Instead of remaining a sect separated from the workers it endeavours to be part of the larger movement of workers in order to win them for the final goal.—

I am, etc.,

H. M'SHANE.

Evening Times, November 1, 1935.

COMMUNIST PARTY AND MILITARISM.

Sir,—I should like to reply to Mr. M'Shane's letter in Wednesday's *Times,* but I would add that I intend this to be my last letter. There is nothing remarkable in defending Mr. Maxton's absolutely sound attitude on the question of sanctions, and approving of George Lansbury's current pacifism, whilst insisting that Parlia-

mentary Socialism has betrayed the workers' struggle. Mr. M'Shane complains of my vigorous attack on the Communist Party but he wisely makes no attempt to defend its attitude towards Arthur Henderson. I challenged him with a concrete illustration and he deems discretion the better part of valour.

The Communist Party attitude towards militarism is dictated by the capitalist policy and needs of the Soviet Union, and every intelligent person knows that no individual can advocate military sanctions on the part of the British Government without supporting British armaments. As the Communist Party has never had a consistent attitude for five minutes at a time, as it opposing the Labour Party at one moment in the interests of the working class struggle and rushing to support the Labour Party against Fascism the next, it must be very difficult for the ordinary worker to know what is really the attitude of the Communist Party.

Whoever demands military sanctions is demanding war. The mass of the workers will realise this is true and any pretence to the contrary by Mr. M'Shane or Litvinov or Harry Pollitt, when speaking on the same platform as the Tory candidate for Edinburgh, is rubbish. I suppose it is the class war that united Pollitt and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and a Tory candidate. To support the Labour Party at the present moment, after having denounced it for many years, is a waste of energy. Particularly when there is no difference between the Labour Party and the National Government. What sane worker would say that Emanuel Shinwell had any superior policy to offer than that of Ramsay MacDonald, or that it mattered to the workers which candidate was returned. The Communist Party had no fundamental principles to conceal or desert. As to its tactical line, if that is the correct phrase with which to describe the pursuit of a policy of disaster, one must confess that its history is one of "No Change."

I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Scots Marriage Law

Evening Times, December 24, 1935.

SCOTS MARRIAGE LAW.

Sir,—I do not think that the Secretary of State for Scotland is to be congratulated on the Commission he has appointed to inquire into the marriage law of Scotland. As a matter of fact, the Scottish law of irregular marriage is the most rational and most moral law in the world, and I am surprised at the Scots Nationalists allowing an English Parliament to challenge this law with its clear principle of Scottish jurisprudence, at the behest of Anglo-Saxon Nonconformist pious sentiments.

Even Gretna Green marriages would involve no abuse but for the operations of the 1856 Act, which was passed to cripple the principle of Scots law. I have studied the Scots law of marriage over a period of 30 years, and have collected a host of information on the subject, and I hold that most certainly this is an institution upon which the clerics, with their empty pews and their stupid English allies, have no right to speak. It is a sound ancient institution based on common law and justified by results.

I am not a Scots Nationalist, but a Socialist or Communist, although not of the West Fife Labour Party variety. But I respect Mr. R. E. Muirhead as a man of principle, and I ask him why he does not convene a conference to maintain an essential principle of Scots law and life.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Citizen, Glasgow, June 19, 1936.

SOVIET TRIAL.

Sir,—I do not propose to waste much of your valuable space upon Mr. M'Shane. The reference to the previous "admissions" of Zinoviev and Kamenev is unfortunate, because it means that these men have been tried twice for the same offence, which is contrary to all law. The Ogpu replaced the Cheka, which was the direct successor to the Czar's Okrana. The circumstances of its development mean that there is no division of function in the Soviet Government; and this means no real trial at all.

I have a long list of Socialist, Communist and Anarchist prisoners "railroaded" by the Bolsheviks since 1919, without trial, tortured in prison, and compelled to confess. I can list the tortures and give names and careers. With such facts before me, I have no hesitation, nor has any genuine Socialist any hesitation, in re-

jecting as fake this amazing pretence of a trial in Moscow. Time will prove I am right.

It is interesting to note that when I published, in November, 1925, Lenin's suppressed letter to the Communist Party of Russia, exposing Zinoviev, the "yes-men" of the British Party attacked my meetings and accused me of lying. They now admit I was right, and are sorry Lenin's letter was suppressed at any time. What a crew! Judge, executioner, prosecutor, and apologist in one! This is the role of every Stalinist; which means he must be a primitive organism.

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Citizen, September 8, 1936.

SOVIET EXECUTIONS.

Sir,—Every sane Socialist and Communist, every lover of liberty, will endorse your editorial comment on Mr. H. M'Shane's "apology" for the Italian Government. There is no defence for the Moscow frame up, any more than there is a defence for the imprisonments without trial in Germany. Stalinism is tragic-comic South American politics applied to Europe with a vengeance.

What an outcry would go up if such a thing happened in Britain. If this Moscow trial is right law, I should have been sentenced to death at the Old Bailey in 1909, instead of being sentenced to 12 months in the First Division, as a political offender. The then Attorney-General reasoned just like the Moscow one; only, I must acknowledge, he used a little less invective.

Mr. M'Shane has never heard of innocent persons "confessing." The man's reading is poor. Innocents before Judge Jeffreys "confessed," and the history of martyrdom is replete with the records of martyrs who "confessed," but later recanted. Prison-torture can force "confessions." In the end, other "confessions" will prove this view right, and wipe into oblivion Stalin's apologists. The execution (sic) of Zinoviev and Kamenev is the end of Bolshevism and the epitaph of the Third International. The workers have no common cause with murder. The Moscow "trial" is the culmination of the steady persecution that has been going on in Russia since 1919. Zinoviev and Kamenev were parties to these outrages, and have paid the penalty of acquiescence.

GUY A. ALDRED.

Scots Marriage Law

"Evening Times," January—February, 1937. *Actual date is placed above the letters.*

IN FAVOUR OF SCOTS MARRIAGE LAW.

STRONG CRITICISMS OF MORISON REPORT.

January 25, 1937.

DULL AND VISIONLESS REPORT.

SCOTS RATIONAL AND MORAL DOCTRINE.

Sir,—It is to be hoped that the people of Scotland will not be satisfied with this exceptionally dull and mediocre, visionless report on the Scots law of irregular marriage.

The doctrine of marriage by interchange of consent is the most rational and moral doctrine of marriage in the world. It has been explained and defended by some of the greatest Judges and lawyers that Scotland has produced, men to whom on all other points of orthodoxy I am in profound opposition.

The present report means sweeping away Scots law to suit the Nonconformist conscience of England. The last link of Scotland with common sense and radical and sound thought is severed to suit the needs of an irrational economic and moral code based on class professionalism.

The True Solution.

The true solution of the marriage tangle is this, that three different systems of marriage shall exist legally and conventionally side by side:—

1—Irregular marriages as at present. Gretna Green has nothing to do with irregular marriage, and is an excuse.

2—Civil marriage in simple form, recognising that marriage is a contract. This suits those who do not like marriage unless it is registered. Of course, irregular marriages should be either registered or not, as the parties wish. Marriage by habit and repute should remain.

3—Religious marriages, according to the rites of the Church in which the parties believe. This for those persons who believe that marriage is a sacrament, and not a civil contract.

To read this report one would imagine that there were no separations, bigamies, false registrations, and divorces in England. I could illustrate the point in the case of my own parents and my own really amazing status in law, which illustrates the absolute abuse to which all this registration business can be put. I should have been on that Committee. The report would have been different.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

January 28, 1937.

THE NONCONFORMIST CONSCIENCE.

MARRIAGES BY ANGLICAN CLERGY.

Sir,—In your issue of January 25, Guy Aldred indulges in a cheap, silly sneer at the "Nonconformist conscience of England," and as an English Nonconformist I shall be obliged if you will allow me to ask him when and in what way the Nonconformists of England had anything to do with the making of the marriage laws of England or Scotland. I deny it.

Whereas Nonconformists could be married only in churches specially licensed or registered for weddings, and that always in the presence of a registrar, the Anglican clergy could marry in any Anglican church or chapel attached to their church without the presence of any official, the minister acting as registrar. Does he imagine that if they had controlled the passing of these laws the Nonconformists would have been such fools as to shackle themselves in that manner? Not likely.

I hope, however, that the Scots will be pleased with that back-handed compliment paid them when he says that "the last link of Scotland with common sense and radical and sound thought is severed," etc.

But I would so like to know all about those Nonconformist marriage law-makers, because I understood our marriage Acts, amended a little since, were passed about 80 years ago, and I shall be surprised to hear that Nonconformists had much political power or influence then. An Act to suppress irregular marriages in Scotland, I think, was passed in 1856.—I am, etc.,

FRANK DAVIES.

GREATEST LEGAL OUTRAGE.

AGAINST CONSTITUTION AND LAW.

Sir,—Mr. Cassells, M.P. for Dumbartonshire, it is reported, intends to ask in the House of Commons if legislation dealing with Scottish marriage is to be introduced. Why should he be so anxious to rush through legislation imposing the finding of the Morison report on the people of Scotland? The entire business is the greatest legal outrage ever perpetrated in the history of Scotland, an outrage against the Constitution, the law, and the moral and social code.

Does Mr. Cassells, and does the Secretary for Scotland, actually think that the Morison report is going to be accepted without

challenge? I assure both the member for Dumbartonshire and the Secretary of State for Scotland that such is not the case. The Scots law of marriage must stand.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

February 4, 1937.

Sir,—The report of the Morison Committee is too important for a side discussion to be developed on the question of English Nonconformity with your correspondent Frank Davies. I never suggested that the Nonconformists were responsible for the 1856 legislation, and I do not deny the injustice endured by them at the instance of the Anglican Church.

I do suggest that the outcry of recent years against the Scots law of irregular marriage has been stimulated by the psuedo Puritanism of England, developed in the Nonconformist press, and urged in the pulpit and on the platforms of the English Nonconformist churches or chapels. Where English Nonconformists have fought for liberty I have the same wholesome respect for them that I have for the martyrs of the Protestant Reformation or the Covenanters of Scotland. Mine was a passing sneer, inspired by indignation, and can be withdrawn if unjust.

Because marriage is a spiritual union, and not a union of bodies, the Scots irregular marriage must remain. If no man should put asunder those whom God has joined together, what greater evidence of union does one wish than the fact of the marriage of habit and repute? Irregular marriage requires consent, actual, living, ever-present consent and consecration. But it requires no ceremony. Real marriage is not a rite but a fact.

Another correspondent wants all marriages registered. Why? Let births be registered, and registered truly. That is important. Let deaths be registered, and registered truly. That is important. But marriages concern the parties only, and should be registered or not as they wish. The issue of those marriages concern the community for various reasons but not the marriages.

Why this belief in the great power of registration this faith in the power of Parliamentary enactments run mad? The Scots people, like the English, have the reputation of democracy. And they have shown that democracy on occasion by being able to judge correctly between real social liberty and mere legislative enactment. Let them do so.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

February 6, 1937.

Sir,—Guy Aldred wants births and deaths registered, but not marriages. How, then, are the children of parents who have not

had their marriage registered to prove or know whether they are illegitimate in the eyes of the law or not?

He says marriages concern the parties only. They do not. They concern the children also, and in their interest all marriages should be registered. All forms of irregular marriage should be abolished, as they invariably lead to trouble all round.—I am, etc.,

EX-REGISTRAR.

Sir,—"Ex-Registrar," replying to my suggestion that births and deaths should be registered and registered truly while the registration of marriages should be a private matter for the parties concerned, asks—"How, then, are the children of parents who have not had their marriage registered to prove or know whether they are illegitimate in the eyes of the law or not?" Let me ask him a question—"How are the children of bigamous marriages to know whether they are legitmate or not?" This routine faith in registration, without regard to the question whether the details registered are true or false, is absurd.

The least important thing is whether children should be legitamate or illegitimate for registration purposes. The most important thing is that we should know who they are, and, whether legitimate or illegitimate, who the parents are. This is absolutely essential, and we should develop absolute integrity of approach to the question of registration.

Scots irregular marriage does that. The English system does not. Please let your readers remember this is a question that calls for most serious consideration and discussion. Dont' let us be futile.—

I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, Monday, Feb. 21, 1937.

WAR—WHAT MUST BE DONE.

5 Baliol Street, Glasgow, C.3.

The world's press is teeming with news of war, rumours of wars, and preparations for war. It is a sorry pass that science, ethics, politics, property, and religion have brought the peoples of the earth to accept. Central Europe has returned to paganism. The so-called democracies mark time, preparing for the worst. Socialists, where they still exist, use the materialist conception of history to explain why workers must make war material.

I do not accept the inevitability of war under capitalism. Whilst I agree that there can be no security for humanity, no end for crime,

until Socialism comes, not as a crude dictatorship but as a genuine economic and political democracy, a genuine social libertarian revolution, I do not agree that we have to wait until then to save cities from being destroyed, children from being blown to pieces, women from being gassed.

As regards Christendom, I hold that the time has come for the churches to abandon their theologies and creeds and return to the plain ethics of brotherhood, real brotherhood, peace and love taught by Jesus of Nazareth and the first Christians. The Church must either do this or be destroyed in the welter of paganism it is supporting. I ask for an opportunity to put this view of a brotherhood pulpit and all that it implies before the Churches in this city. Surely somewhere there are folk with influence who, rather than see their city perish in flames, are prepared to hear the heretic who might show them the power of the pulpit to save mankind from real terror and from actual hell on earth.

I believe war can be ended by planning and sound approach. I have a practical policy, practical and sound, to submit that would end war. Surely there are organisations and people existing that could convene a conference to hear and to discuss that policy. It is as important as television and any scientific research.

GUY A. ALDRED.

This letter was reproduced in *The Brotherhood of The Way*, the organ of the Tramp Preachers, for March—April, 1938, published at Hitchin. The editor of this magazine commented:—

"It is recorded in the Gospels, that on one occasion the disciples asked Jesus to rebuke a man for casting out devils although he was not of them. Jesus just smiled and asked if there was any sense in stopping a man from doing good work. We publish the above letter because we consider that this anarchist's message can help many Christians to understand more fully their religion. Guy Aldred has suffered eight years' imprisonment for anti-militarist activities. He has had thirty years' intensive public propaganda. And thus his ideas are worth considering."

Letters to the Editor

Evening Times, Glasgow, Oct. 5, 1937.

THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE.

I wish to refer to the anti-Fascist rioting in London and Aberdeen. The persons who barricaded the streets against Sir Oswald Mosley in Bermondsey when he took his Sunday walk are the friends and allies of Fascism, not its enemies. The crowd that prevented the Fascist speaker being heard at the Aberdeen Market Stance are enemies of progress and democracy.

Sir Oswald Mosley had the right to demonstrate in London. His henchman had the right to speak in Aberdeen. The demonstration should have taken place— in silence. There would have been no flourishing advertising, no newspaper screaming—just silence, and silence would end Fascism.

The question is not whether silence ends Fascism or not. The question is the right of violence, the right of rioting against free speech, the dangerous suppression of thought. It is easier to create a riot than to develop a thought. And the world to-day needs thought. I do not mean that thought should supplant action. I mean that thought should inspire action. But riot is not thought; riot is tumultuous hysterical mockery of action at times.

I do not like Sir Oswald Mosley. I did not like him when he was the pet of the I.L.P. or when Willie Gallacher and others wanted to secure his return for Smethwick. I was opposed to him then and am opposed to him now. He has money and I have none. He can do things with money which I cannot do, for the sole reason that I have no money. The dice is loaded against me. It is most unfair.

But still Mosley has the right to demonstrate, and his henchmen have the right to be heard. It is no more wrong to propound Fascism than it is to preach Communism. The era of dictatorship and violence is a dangerous era to inaugurate. It begins with Communism and ends with Fascism. It shoots the Czar as a protest against the evils of Czarism, and concludes with the murder of Zinoviev and Kamenev and a thousand other pioneers of various forms of Socialism and Communism. And, in any case, it is wrong in itself.

Whether demonstrations should be held at this moment or that is a practical question purely, depending on traffic conditions, work and commerce. That demonstrations should be held, that they should be held irrespective of the party or faction who promotes them, that those who hold them should be protected in the holding, is unquestionable. It is the essence of democracy and finally of progress towards human justice and democracy.

If war and wrong are to end we need democracy.

I have spoken in Bermondsey. I spoke there for Socialism 31 years ago. I spoke there during the war, against the war, and

had my meeetings smashed. I know Aberdeen well. I spoke there against the war. When some one wishes to smash up the meetings of my opponent I suspect they may yesterday have smashed my meetings; or, what is worse, may wish to do so to-morrow. Let us have done with violence and riot, unless hunger itself compels. Let us maintain liberty of speech and thought as the inalienable right of man.

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, October 9, 1937.

OPPOSITION TO FASCISM.

2 Iona Street, Glasgow, S.W.1.

After reading Mr. Aldred's letter I feel that I have something I would like to say on the matter dealt with. In the first place Mr. Aldred has little to say against the Fascists, but plenty to say against the Communists. He claims to stand for democracy despite the fact that he has been denouncing the Communist Party for its support of democracy in Spain.

If we believe either in democracy or Socialism it is clear that all attempts by the Fascists to win power must be checked. Fascism is revealed in Italy and Germany as the enemy of progress. In Spain we see Fascism trying to destroy democracy. Yet Mr. Aldred says it should be met by silence.

British Fascism is no different from Italian or German Fascism. The Fascist organisation in this country supports Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. Need we have any doubt as to the aims of British Fascism? I for one am glad to know that the Fascists are meeting with opposition in every part of the country.

I feel that Mr. Aldred's hatred for the Communist Party is causing him to take up a foolish attitude on the question of Fascism. It should be clear, however, that opposition to the Fascists is not confined to Communists. I hope that the time is not far distant when Fascism will be suppressed by the Government. At the same time we must be on our guard in case the rights and liberties won in past years are not taken away by the passing of Fascist measures through Parliament.

H. M'SHANE.

Evening Times, October 15, 1937.

RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE.

Mr. H. M'Shane's reply to my letter on the right to demonstrate calls for a reply. I have been a Communist, a real Communist, since 1906. Mr. M'Shane has called himself a Communist only

since Lenin misapplied that term to a section of the Russian Social Democrats following the Bolshevik Revolution. Russian Communism is merely another name for State capitalism, bureaucracy, dictatorship, and despotism.

All this has nothing to do with the right of the Fascists to demonstrate equally with other political factions and fractions in Britain. If I criticised people for interfering with the right to demonstrate, and those persons called themselves Communists, that is unfortunate; but it does not invalidate the right to demonstrate.

Apparently Mr. M'Shane is afraid of free speech. I am not. He wants the Government and Parliament to suppress free speech for Fascism. But his party also denies free speech to Fenner Brockway. This word Fascism is bandied about as a mere word of abuse.

What a study! The people who once pretended to despise Parliament and to preach proletarian insurrection now want the British Government by Act of Parliament to suppress Fascism! All the while poverty remains and their M.P.s draw £600 a year.

If anti-Fascism cannot hold its own in free and open debate; if, given open debate, the British people decide on Fascism, then Fascism has every right to come. I can no more see the British working class going mad for Fascism than for Leninism.

The question is not one of merits, of hopes or fears, but of right. Free speech, free press and the right to demonstrate are the fundamental rights of humanity in every clime, and whosoever opposes them is an enemy of the human race, whether he styles himself Communist or Fascist, whether his speech be English, Russian or Italian.

I have urged freedom. I believe in freedom. And there, so far as I am concerned, the matter ends.

GUY A. ALDRED.

Evening Times, November 20, 1937.

ARE WE AGAINST OPPRESSION?

To my mind one of the great evils in the world to-day and a sign of the moral degeneracy of our alleged political democracy is that very few of us are against oppression because it is a violation of justice. We are only opposed to oppression and denounce it as a violation of justice when the sect or party to which we belong is victimised.

Should the group of which we are members be top dog we find some excuse for dictatorship or persecution and adopt the argument that the end justifies the means. The end of the top dog in every case is to remain the top dog.

Many illustrations could be given of this. No one would dream that the Italian philosophy of to-day is the product of the philosophy of Mazzini. Only Bakunin prophesied that Mazzini's idealism would lead to tyranny.

As with nations so with men. Terrorism did not exist in Russia for Trotsky until he became its victim. Indeed, he rejoiced in terrorism and fearfully has he repented it. The German Christians were silent about the persecution of Socialists and Jews. Nazi terrorism began with themselves. Socialists of various descriptions pass splendid resolutions against Fascism because it "tortures women in prisons and concentration camps." But they find no word of solidarity or protest for the Socialist women who have been continually persecuted in the Soviet "Fatherland." As all other voices are silent, may I trespass on your columns with the names of a few of these victims?

Eva Broido is a Menshevik who has led an irreproachable life of Socialist struggle and propaganda for 40 years. It is eight years now since she was condemned first to a life of imprisonment and afterwards to deportation in the worst wilds of Siberia. The Czar did no worse. Years ago Alexandra Bronstein, a Bolshevik, aged 60, a Socialist since her 'teens, completely disappeared into the region of the Polar circle. Maria Joffe, a life-long Socialist, and later Bolshevik, has been in prison for nine years. Her husband was the famous Soviet diplomat who committed suicide in 1928 as a protest against the State capitalism and tyranny that was developing in Russia. Her son perished of privation in Central Asia.

Maria Spiridonova, whose famous trial under the Czar has become a classic story, has been in prison since 1918 merely because she insisted on remaining a member of the left wing Socialist revolutionaries, and refused to become a Bolshevik. When Eric Muhsam was martyred to death in a Nazi concentration camp, the Socialists of the world protested. His wife, Zenzi Muhsam was invited to Russia. She protested against the executions of Zinoviev and Kamenev, and was immediately arrested. She has not been heard of since. Othello Gagi, an Italian anti-Fascist, was deported by the Soviet Government to Italy, where the authorities dealt with him. His wife was arrested by the Soviet Government and deported, no one knows where. Besides these persons I have a list of the names of Communist and Socialist women before me, all imprisoned or living in exile under barbarous conditions for the offence of holding their own ideas.

The entire Labour movement is blind and deaf to the sufferings of these people. So-called Socialist leaders protest against Fascism, and do not realise that they are merely hypocrites.

GUY A. ALDRED.

Letters to the Editor

THE NEED FOR TOLERANCE.

In the Glasgow *Bulletin,* for Saturday, May 28, 1938, the Rev. F. H. E Harfitt, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, 541-543 Grand Bldgs., Trafalgar Square, London, published a letter, dated May 25, asking "why no protest had come from the Christian people in Glasgow" against "the Lord Provost and members of the Corporation giving a civic welcome to an atheistic conference which is taking place in Glasgow during Whitsuntide."

Bulletin, Glasgow, Wednesday, June 1, 1938.

5 Baliol St., Glasgow, May 28.

Sir,—I noticed the letter from the Rev. F. H. E. Harfitt in the name of the Christian Evidence Society. I have known this society for many years, dating back to the days when I was a boy preacher.

Actually, its propaganda is not Christian, and the statements of its defenders are devoid singularly of evidence. Some of its past Hyde Park propaganda against Charles Darwin, Thomas H. Huxley, Charles Bradlaugh, G. W. Foote, etc., was a disgrace to the Anglican Church.

I do not much approve of Lord Provost Stewart. But why should he not welcome the National Secular Society? Secularists are an important section of the community. Why should not Secularists be welcomed as well as Catholics and Protestants. I would have Jews and Mohammedans welcomed also.

Mr. Harfitt strikes the true orthodox Church note—the note of anti-Christianity—when he complains that Glasgow is too tolerant. Toleration is not a concession. It is a social right. There was no toleration in the days of old at Smithfield, and there is no toleration in Berlin, Rome, and Moscow politically to-day.

I am not a member of the National Secular Society. I have my own quarrels with it. But when distinguished members of both Houses of Parliament, and distinguished American and other statesmen, are Secularists, why should Secularists not receive a civic welcome to Glasgow?

I challenge Mr. Harfitt to debate, in London if he will, as I shall be there on June 20, the case for tolerance.—I am, etc.,

GUY A. ALDRED.

In the *Evening Times* for October 10, H. M'Shane defended "the National Council of Labour, the Parliamentary Labour Party, and the Communist Party," and declared that these parties "wanted to unite Britain, France, and Russia against aggression." Even were this true, it would mean the negation of the social war for a national war, and a repudiation of the class struggle preached by Socialists for nearly a century.

Evening Times, October 13, 1938.

COMMUNISTS AND WAR.

The attempt of H. M'Shane to defend the attitude of the Labour Party and of the Communist Party in connection with the recent crisis makes ludicrous reading.

In 1924 the Communist Party would have attacked such an attitude on the part of the Labour Party and denounced it as a war attitude. There is not the least doubt that during the period of crisis both the Labour Party and the Communist Party did adopt a war position. Many youths must have been recruited for the forces as a result of their campaign.

The mere fact that a number of Labour members of Parliament were against the last war does not mean that they would be opposed to war preparation to-day. Time changes politicians.

Mr. M'Shane says that the British Government helped Germany to arm. That is true. The Russian Government also helped Germany to arm, and defended its activity before a meeting of the Third International. It also urged German Communists to join the German army.

It is quite true that the opponents of war must also be the opponents of Fascism. But why not say Capitalism instead of Fascism? In any case, if the opponents of war must be the opponents of Fascism why did Soviet Russia supply oil to Fascist Italy?

It may be that Mr. Chamberlain requires to explain a few things. But it seems to me that the Labour Imperialist critics of Chamberlain and the Communist Party war mongers have to explain even things more.

GUY A. ALDRED.

In the *Evening Times*, Mr. Arthur J. Montague, Secretary, Friends of National Spain, published a letter defending the dinner organised by his society, at the Grosvenor Restaurant, " to celebrate the liberation of Barcelona." In the author's view, this was the capture of that great city by Franco, at the head of conscript foreign legions of reactionaries.

Evening Times, February 7, 1939.

BARCELONA CELEBRATIONS—WHY?

5 Baliol Street, Glasgow, C.3.

On page 5 of last night's *Times* you print a heading, "Italian Troops Will Not Leave Spain Till Franco Finally Wins." The Duce, who is a renegade Syndicalist, rejoices openly in the part

played by the Italian troops in Spain. This was denied when I first asserted the fact in the 1936 leaflets issued by the United Socialist Movement. But to-day it is a matter of boasting and rejoicing.

On page 4 of the same issue of the *Times* you publish the letter of Mr. Arthur J. Montague, hon. secretary, the Friends of National Spain, defending the Barcelona dinner. I see no reason why people should not celebrate the Italian invasion of Spain and the defeat of a starved-out and conspired-against Government. That is democracy. I may not approve of people who demonstrated outside the Grosvenor Restaurant, although I believe Fascists have demonstrated against food lorries to Spain.

But is it not absurd, even ludicrous, to speak of the invasion of Barcelona by foreign troops, by German and Italian equipped and organised forces, the way paved by foreign bombing aeroplanes, as "the liberation of National Spain"?

Franco may win the war, but the man is a traitor; and if a Socialist invaded his own country at the head of foreign troops, aided by foreign finance, everyone would see the point—even Mr. Montague.

GUY A. ALDRED.

Author's Appeal

TO EDITORS, READERS AND LIBRARIANS.

[It was the author's intention to collect his pamphlets and publish them in one volume. The war may make this impossible. But each pamphlet in **The Word Library** will be sent round as suggested. So the appeal stands, applied to the entire series. Collection in one volume is postponed.]

This collection of essays will be sent to a number of papers in all parts of the world for review. It will be sent specially to the press in Britain, America, the American Colonies, and the British Dominions. Editors are asked, as a favour, to send copies of their papers containing review notices to the author.

The volume will be sent, also, to the chief public libraries in Britain and the United States. It will be sent post free to any public library in the world on the receipt of an application from the librarian. Readers are reminded that the first editions of each of the pamphlets, revised and collected in this volume, can be consulted in the British Museum. Some of them are to be found in the Public Library at New York.

Readers are asked to purchase several copies of the work and to circulate the copies among their friends. Order small quantities at reduced rates. The struggle for bread and freedom, for culture and liberty as well as security, must be revived and rewaged. If

the reader belongs to some organisation that conducts meetings, he should arrange for the author to visit his town, and to be afforded a free platform from which to define his position. The author may be wrong on a thousand points, but the revival of thought and discussion must be right. The Glasgow Clarion Society did this in 1912. Why not your organisation to-day?

The widespread circulation of this work, apart from its cost of printing, will be an expensive business. It will be followed by other books that will be circulated in the same way. If the reader has enjoyed reading *Essays in Revolt,* and if he can assist in the cost of popularising the book, he or she should do so. The author welcomes donations in the struggle and the money so received will be used in the public interest and to further the cause of thought and freedom to which he has dedicated his energies. A thousand people, helping from a thousand quarters, are an organisation of strength and energy for progress, the force of which cannot be estimated. Help now.

Also, if you are critical, send along your criticisms. If you see a notice of this book, friendly or unfriendly, send it along.

Whatever your communication, address it to the author at his private address: GUY ALDRED, 5 BALIOL STREET, GLASGOW, C.3., SCOTLAND.

Author's Other Works Include:

SOCIALISM AND PARLIAMENT.—Part I.—Socialism or Parliament. 1934. Rewritten and Revised Edition. Out of Print. Shortly to be reprinted. 16 chapters and 8 appendices.

SOCIALISM AND PARLIAMENT.—Part II.—Government by Labour. 3rd Edition. Rewritten and Revised. Shortly to be published.

FOR COMMUNISM. (1935.) 21 chapters and 12 appendices. Shortly to be reprinted, with slight revisions and corrections.

These booklets will be issued in popular form, for wide circulation, at absurdly cheap prices, to stimulate purchase and study.

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These books will be issued rapidly from the Press—in slightly less popular form than the works previously mentioned, because they belong to study rather than to ordinary propaganda. The interest in these writings will be special rather than general.

AT GRIPS WITH WAR. First Edition, 1929. Second Edition, 1932. This work will be re-issued at an early date.

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